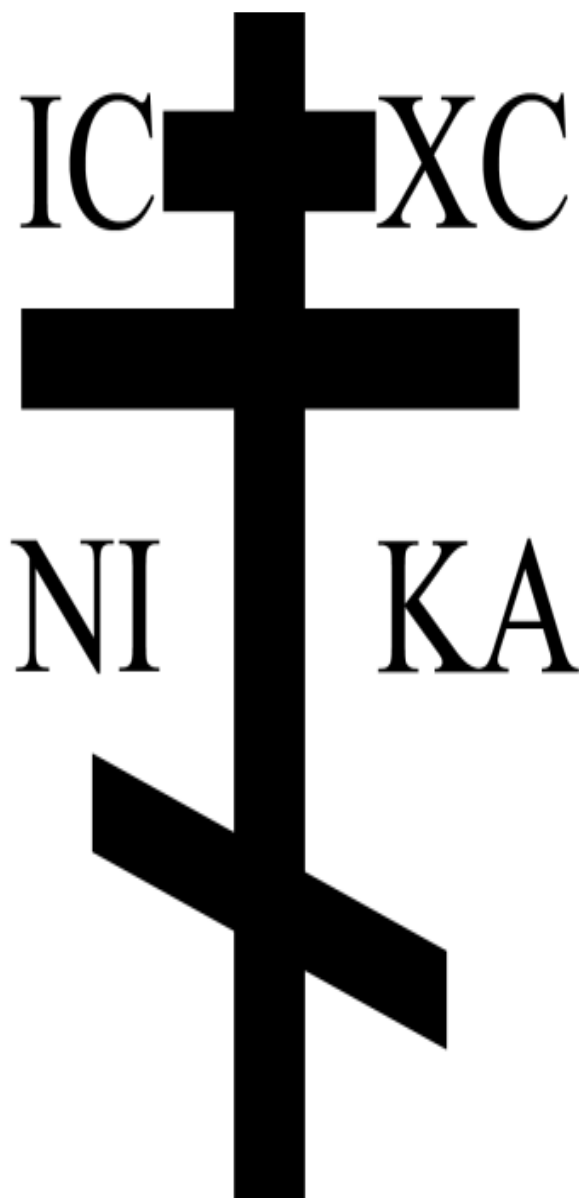


*Priest Professor PhD Academician*  
**DUMITRU STĂNILDAE**



**THE ROMANIAN PHILOKALIA**

**- VOLUME X -**

“So, the inward man is reckoned as the imageless state of the mind. In that indefinite, by missing any narrowing through the successive images of the things and of the imaginings, there can dwell Christ Who by the fact that He is God He matches that indefinite place, and by the fact that He is man He is felt close to us and in connection with us. The mind becomes focused on Him and only on Him. He is being explained what Saint Mark the Hermit says in the *Word about Baptism (The Romanian Philokalia*, volume I), where Christ is seen, in His quality as Hierarch, as receiving all our thoughts on the altar of our hearts, from their first occurrence within mind. But Saint Isaac completes the idea, by specifying that Christ as Hierarch, He fill up everything within us, and He spreads around His good fragrance in the indefinite precipice into the depths of the soul, filling us up with good fragrance. The bottomless precipice of the soul it is so kindred to the bottomless precipice of the godhead that one cannot see a border between them two. You only feel that you heart is not unveiled as precipice, except for there is another precipice more capable of maintaining itself as such, and you feel that your heart discovered or it actualized also the precipice of your heart. Of you feel the difference only in that that your precipice prays to the precipice of Him Who fills your precipice up as another abyss. And then you feel that not only Christ spreads around the good fragrance of the incense, but yourself do that to, by bringing on yourself as sacrifice to Christ. By living on yourself as precipice and by living on Christ as precipice within yourself, you will dare in your prayer. This is for you are no longer separated from Christ by something, but you feel Christ sunk within you and you feel yourself as sunk into Him, but without Him to be confounded to you.”

**Priest Professor PhD Academician Dumitru, The  
Romanian Philokalia, volume X, E.I.B.M.O., Bucharest,**

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# HILOKALIA

**OR COLLECTION FROM THE WRITINGS  
OF THE HOLY FATHERS WHICH  
SHOWS HOW THE MAN CAN BE  
CLEANED, ENLIGHTENED AND  
BECOME PERFECT**

**VOLUME X**

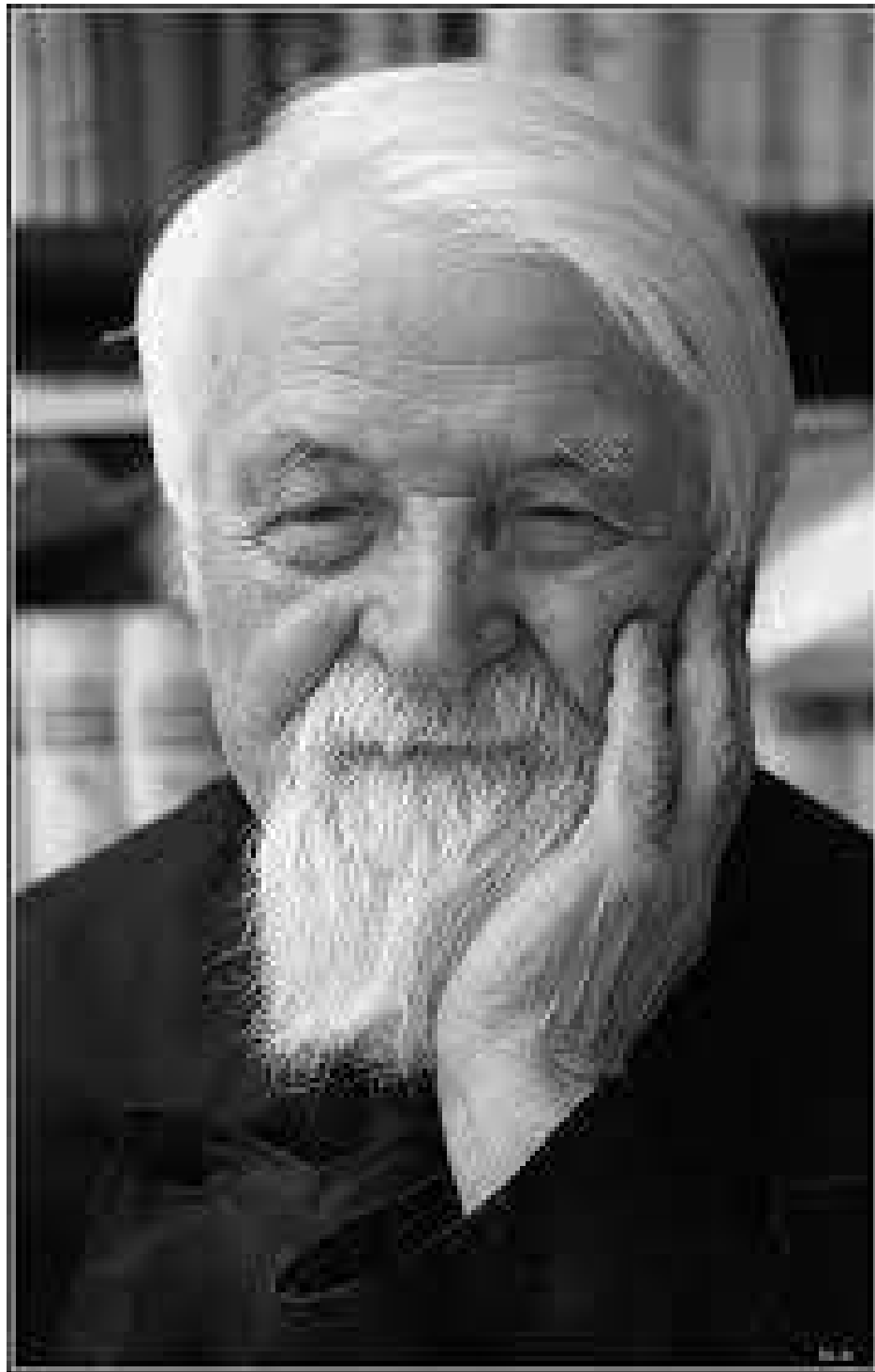
TRANSLATION<sup>1</sup>, INTRODUCTION AND  
FOOTNOTES BY

**DUMITRU  
STĂNILOAE**

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<sup>1</sup> The texts of *The Romanian Philokalia* were translated from the Greek language in the Romanian language and put together by Priest Professor PhD Academician Dumitru Stăniloae.

Translated from the Romanian language in the English language, by the will of God, by the most worthless from men: E.I.t. (Translated between 07. 21. 2024 – 09. 23. 2024).



**Priest Professor PhD Academician Dumitru Stăniloae**



# **Saint Issac the Syrian**

## **Words about the Holy Ascetic Toils**

**Translation, introductions, and notes by  
Fr. Prof. PhD Dumitru Stăniloae<sup>2</sup>**

**Bucharest  
Publishing House and the Printing House of the Biblical and  
Of Orthodox Mission Institute  
1981**

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<sup>2</sup> Meaning that Fr. Prof. PhD Dumitru Stăniloae translated the original texts from Greek to Romanian. This English translation has been done by the most worthless among men: E. t. l. (between 07. 21. 2024 -

## Saint Isaac and His Work

1. The “Ascetic Words” or “about asceticism” belonging to Saint Isaac the Syrian, have been used extensively in the Eastern monastic life. Proof to that are the numerous codices comprising them. They were translated from the Syriac language to the Greek language by two monks, Avramie and Patrachie from Saint Sava Monastery, near to Bethlehem. The number of the *Words* varies, as some of their parts have been rounded in separate *Words*, or they have been framed within other *Words*. By and large, their number varies between 85 and 99 *Words*. To these are added four epistles. Neither the order of the *Words* is always the same. The most information in the field of the matter is given by Nicephorus Theotokis in the *Introduction* he wrote to his edition from the year 1770, at Lipsca, the first printed in Greek edition of the *Words* of Isaac the Syrian.

The text printed by Nicephorus Theotokis, and reprinted in the year 1895 at Athens, by hieromonk Joachim Spetzieri, it is full of grammatical and syntactical mistakes. Nicephorus Theotokis ascertained that the texts is the same in all the codices he came across, and that’s why he reckoned that that was due to the translators themselves. This determined any translation done by him to be rather a true rebuilding, more or less corresponding, of the content deriving from the author. The same aspect determined the Romanian translation published at Neamț Monastery, by the zeal and taking care of Archimandrite Ilarie, who was the abbot of Neamț and Secu Monasteries, to be very difficult to understand, because it was translated verbatim after the so faulty Greek original. The newer Romanian translation, non-printed, it is, at its turn, quite far from the content of the Greek text.

We have been striving to render a translation, on one hand, as faithful as possible, and on the other hand, in as intelligible as possible sentences.

Nicephorus Theotokis, based on the Epistles sent by Saint Isaac to Simeon, and by reckoning that this Simeon was the Young Simeon the pillar-hermit (who lived between the year 531-596), he reckoned that Isaac lived in that century too, and he ended his life before the year 600.

O. Bardenhewer declares that, based on the “newer researches”, this Isaac would have lived around the end of the Century VII<sup>3</sup>.

H. G. Beck goes even further, by affirming that Issac was, during the Century VII, for a few months, a Nestorian Bishop at Nineveh, and through him the mystique of Evagrius entered Byzantium. His translators in Greek attribute the texts quoted by Issac from Evagrius under the name of Saint Gregory of Nyssa. “Although Issac knew Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite, he follows in the first lie to the system of Evagrius”<sup>4</sup>.

We reckon that the problem of Issac’s identity still isn’t solved, as also the Syriac basis of the Greek text requires extensive studies before being solved. This is similar to other cases which conclusions were drawn in but they later have been proven as wrong (Makarius, Diadochus, Saint Maximos the Confessor etc.).

Identifying our author to a Nestorian bishop of Nineveh it raises some questions difficult to be solved in the frame of such a hypothesis. For instance: how could a follower of Nestorianism – that strictly separates within Christ the godlike person from the human person – to adopt Evagrius’ mystique that almost confounds the godlike to the man’s deep? Then, how could a follower of Evagrius to so frequently quote from Dionysius the Areopagite who was at the antipode of Evagrius, by placing God in such an accentuated transcendence? Then, there are in the text some sentences directly opposing the Nestorianism. For instance: “Christ renewed our nature through His hypostasis” (Epistle IV). But it is a known fact that the Nestorianism spoke about two hypostases into Christ. Contrary to Nestorianism are also affirmations like these: “And as an end to these ones was given by God and Lord, for His love, His Son through cross to death” (*Word LXXXI*). It is a known fact that according to Nestor not the Son of God died in His human nature, but the man Jesus.

Then it is also a curious fact that Isaac frequently used Dionysius the Areopagite, but he didn’t know Saint Maximos the Confessor. Could Issac overlook the great ascetic-mystical work belonging to Saint Maximos, if he lived after Saint Maximos, or if he was contemporary to Saint Maximos, more

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<sup>3</sup> *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur*, V, Band, 1932, p. 74.

<sup>4</sup> *Kirche und Theologische Literatur im Byzantinischen Reich*, Munich, 1959, p. 453.

precisely, if he wrote after Saint Maximos finished his ascetic-mystical work (626-634)? Likewise, our author doesn't mention John Climacus (579-649), whose work – *The Ladder* – had become famous in the monastic life immediately after being issued.

Issac often quotes authors from the Centuries IV and V (Dionysus the Areopagite would be the last one having his work dating from around the end of the century V). This is a sign that our author belonged to an époque not so far from the end of the Century V. But the spiritual preoccupations of his work are very close to those from *The Ladder*, but they are exposed to Isaac in a less organized manner, and on the other hand the ascetic themes are more widely analyzed, and in addition to them it is given a more extended space to the description of the spiritual experiences of the union with God and of “seeing” God. This leaves us the impression that John Climacus used the work of Isaac the Syrian, by organizing its themes and by focusing their presentation, and not the other way around.

To the eventual objection that the “Nestorian” Isaac could not use Orthodox authors as John Climacus and Maxim the Confessor, despite living later than they did, one can ask: then how could he use Dionysus the Areopagite who, according to the opinions of those (Occidental) authors was close to Monophysitism, and therefore on the opposite extreme to Nestorianism? Of course, there remains the question which is difficult to be answered: why wouldn't John Climacus quote Isaac, if Isaac lived before him? It could be that both of them lived and wrote around the same time, by using a monastic experience circulating among the monks from Syrian and Sinai, among whom, of course, there were certain communications. Or maybe the short time past between the apparitions of their works didn't give to any of them the authority of being quoted.

Saint Isaac occupies on himself in an especially intense manner with four capital themes, which are connected to a multitude of other subordinated themes: a) the importance of the ascetic toils and of the hardships for the consummation of the man, a theme which he manifests in a kinship with Mark the Ascetic; b) the importance of the humbleness, which he can be the greatest of the masters in; c) the knower role of the “feeling”, which he is a predecessor in, to Saint Simeon the New Theologian; d) the insistent description of the state of quietude,

tightly related to that state of the ceaseless prayer and of the love.

About humbleness he says: "Speaking about humbleness means speaking about God Himself". "The humbleness surpasses the whole creation". "The humbleness is a power that tames the wild beasts and it annuls the snakes' venom" (*Word XX*). "The humbleness is the coat of God", he said in another place.

The quietude isn't a simple ceasing of any inward life, but in it are set in more intense work the inward feelings, but through the Ghost, or better said insomuch through the Ghost, that the man no longer feels any worry, and he no longer pays any effort to maintain that state. These feelings, or better said the Holy Ghost through these feelings, it perceives at peak the deeps of God. "The quietude, says Saint Isaac, it kills the external feelings and it wake up the inward feeling" (*Word LXXXV*).

The quietude is reckoned as a big deep or as a great height, as a shore of the mysteries reached by one who floats on the "harsh sea" of the ascetic toils. It is reckoned as a tall building, one built in layers, or as a climbing to ever-higher mysteries, to an ever-advanced consummation. It is a movement of elevation, or of continuous diving into the godlike mysteries, and not a petrification into the void of absence of any spiritual life. The quietude is a diving into the "sea of the quietude", or into the quietude's infinity that is one with the infinity of God. That's why, the ultimate "bosom" of this sea will remain ever-unreachable, and always craved for. It is an abyss and therefore it has not border; it has limitless depth and width. It is the bosom of the supreme non-understood-meaning that needs to be evermore understood. It is the "bosom" of the supreme non-comprisable love, which we desire to embrace it with an ever-fiery longing, with a never-quenched thirst and always drunk with the joy of living it (*Epistle III*). The quietude is a kidnapping of the look at the deeps of God, which are never fully seen, but which are always felt into their infinity. That's why nothing could attract outside on them who have reached it, and nothing could bother them. They who entered the area of the quietude, they are together with the angels, united through quietude and through that silence amazed of God Who is hidden into His quietude. "The Lord Himself is within them who have entered the quietude, and He unveils on Himself to them

as irradiating out of Him that quietude heavy with endless meanings, or, better said, that quietude as unspeakable fullness of all meanings, though it is wrong even to use the word “all” for the infinity of the godlike meanings” (*Ibid*).

One reaches the quietude though, on one hand by cleaning off his passions, and on the other hand through the ceaselessly prayer, which, at their turn, they are indissolubly united. This is for the man get far from his passions – or he forgives about them - especially by praying.

About the prayer Saint Issac says: “Without prayer you cannot get close to God” (*Word XIII*). This is for the prayer cleans the soul up of other thoughts and, itself, only by being cleaned of any other thought it will get fully united with God, of course, if it is winged by the love for God and it won’t remain in a neutral void.

The prayer, by cleaning up one’s mind and heart, it makes shining within them their godlike Sun, says Saint Isaac, anticipating the declarations of the hesychasts from the Century XIV. “I think – he says – that he who is righteous and humble in thought... when he stands to prayer, he sees within his soul the light of the Holy Ghost and he startles with the lightnings of the light and he rejoices of seeing the glory of that light and he rejoices of the changings of his soul in the likeness of that light (*Word LXII*).

But the quietude is a state superior even to this clean and freed of any thought and ceaseless prayer. This is because the quietude is the state of that soul kidnapped by seeing God, when any movement ceases within that soul. “And from the clean prayer to the inward realities, after having crossed this border, the cogitation will no longer have neither the power to work, either in prayer, or in movement, either in crying, or in the self-mastery, either asking or desiring, either pleasure for something among the things hoped in the present life or in the future age. That’s why, after the clean prayer, there is no other prayer... After crossing that border, there will take place a kidnapping and not a prayer. This is for the things of the prayer will have stopped and there will occur a certain seeing. Every kind of done prayer, it is done by movement. But when the mind enters the movements of the Ghost, there will be no prayer” (*Word XXXII*).

The quietude following after prayer it is united with the drunkenness of the love for God. Thus, not only the prayer, but

the love too has a tight connection with the quietude. They who have reached the quietude are kidnapped and drunk by the sweetness of the endless love being overpoured out of God and they will be filled up with the love for God. But within the love for God there is comprised the love for people too, and the love for all creatures, even if they cannot show that by deeds. Their heart is burning with the love for everybody and for everything. "This is for all the saints reach this consummation, when they reach to be consummate and they resemble to God in the abundant springing out of their love for all the people" (*Word LXXXI*).

About that love from this state of quietude, Sain Isaac tells us, among other things: "He who has found the love, he eats Christ; he eats Christ on each day and on each moment, and he becomes immortal by doing that". God will not longer let dying him who loves God so much and him who answers God's love with his love. Everything that exist, it exists as work of love and it is maintained into eternity by love. "Blessed is him who eats the bread of love that is Jesus" (*Word LXXII*).

I do not think that anyone else said deeper and more beautiful words on quietude and on love than Saint Issac the Syrian did.

In tight connection with the love there stays the knowledge. The Paradise is the love of God which are comprise in the delectation and all the blessings. That is the place where the blessed Paul was nourished with above-nature food. And after he tasted out of the tree of life, he shouted out saying: "The things unseen by the eye and unheard by the ear and which haven't ascended to the man's heart, those have been prepared by God to them who love Him" 0 1 Cor. 2: 9 – (*Word LXXII*). Only him who love he knows the spiritual, interpersonal plan. Only him who loves a person will open on himself and that person will reveal to him. Only him who loves God he will also know God on the measure he loves God. In quietude there is a supreme knowledge, for there is a supreme love. This kidnapping into the love and into the knowledge of God Who is the spring of the love and by right by that He is the spring of the life too, (this kidnapping) makes to fade away all the attractions coming from the things and form the pleasure which can be provided by the things sometimes in a passionate manner. This is the positive content of the quietude.

Of course, this knowledge in in the same time a feeling, it is tasting the life and the truth that is the Person of Christ. Any person you know by loving that person, it will communicate you a certain life. But the Person of Christ communicated infinitely more His love through love and through knowledge. (About the theme of the knowledge Saint Isaac the Syrian to be seen the study belonging to father archimandrite Iustin Popovici, *Théorie de la connaissance de Dieu chez Saint Isaac le Syrien*, in "Contacts", Paris, no. 69-70, 1976).

Related to the love for the neighbor, Saint Issac writes as deep and as palpitant rows about having mercy on our neighbor. The mercy, according to Saint Isaac, it doesn't mean only giving somebody your exterior goods, but it means giving on yourself, it means burning with your heart for that one's pain. Only thus you can truly comfort him, by healing him of the deadly sadness of the conscience of his loneliness (*Word XXIII*).

But a satisfactory summarization of the work of Saint Issaac is difficult to be made. Almost each row of it, it is a lightning illuminating depth which are rich in thoughts and in life, and which need to be extensively exposed and commented. We are signaling, in addition to the sentences from above, a few other which sparks in concentrated spiritual truths of great depth and of rich complexity: "The weakness (of those who are souly ill) cannot meet the flame of the things, that uses to weaken the strength of the passions and to resist the passions" (*Word XXIII*). "Hold on tight on these ones (throw yourself day and night before the crops of Christ) and then it will the sun dawn inward you and you will reach being as a flourished Paradise" (*Word CXXVII*). "If you have no deeds you won't speak about virtues. God cherished more the troubles endured t for Him than any other prayer of sacrifice. And the smell of the sweat is above all spices" (*Word LVII*). "The faith is the door of the mysteries" (*Word LXXII*). "The quietude is the mystery of the age to come. And the words are the tools of this world" (*Epistle III*).

But almost the whole Saint Issac's work is a spiritual poem of an unspeakable beauty. Saint Issac convinces us that the spirituality cannot be expressed except in poetry. The poetry is the sole means for expressing the truth of the spiritual plan of the existence. The poetry and the truth go together on this plan.



2. The works of Saint Isaac the Syrian has been copied and translated in many Romanian manuscripts and that proves that it was zealously read in our past. Only in the Library of the Romanian Academy there are ten manuscripts comprising the whole work of Saint Isaac the Syrian and other 26 manuscripts comprising parts of it.

The manuscripts comprising the whole work of Saint Isaac the Syrian are: no. 1649 dating from the Century XIX (1806); no. 1920 dating from the Century XVIII (1794); no. 1927 dating from the Century XVIII; no. 1963 dating from the Century XVIII (1778); no. 2113 dating from the year 1811); no. 3724 dating from the year XVIII; no. 3725 dating from the year XVIII.

The manuscript no. 1963 was written in the year 1778 by Hieromonk Terapon in the Sihăstria-Secu Monastery, and it comprises 86 *Words* and four *Epistles*, but without the *Introduction* written by Nicephorus Theotokis, and without the *Foreword* following after that *Introduction*. The manuscript no. 1927 has the same number of *Words* and *Epistles*, and an identical text, but it is preceded by the *Foreword* written by an anonymous author, but it doesn't contain the *Introduction* written by Theotokis. The text of the two mentioned manuscripts seems to be identical but the copyists were different. Also, without containing the *Introduction* written by Theotokis, but containing the footnotes, it is the text that was printed at Neamț Monastery in the year 1819.

The notes show that the Romanian translation of this edition knew the text printed by Theotokis in the year 1770, but the fact that some paragraphs were omitted while others added, it proves that the Romanian translation used other texts in manuscript too.

A translation according to the edition issued by Theotokis is that from the manuscript no. 2580, one that has both the *Introduction* written by Theotokis and the *Foreword* of the anonymous.

Among the manuscript not comprising the whole work of Saint Isaac we are mentioning here that one with the no. 3562, which between f.1-211r, it comprises the work of Abba Dorotheos, and between f.211-215 v. it comprises: "for the rule and learning of the young beginners" (it corresponds to *Word VII* from our text). It was written in the year 1676 by Hieromonk Vasilie, during the rule of Ghica Vodă and of Metropolitan

Barlaam. But the *Introduction* must have been done before that, some somebody else. This *Word* is also comprised by the manuscript no. 1621 from century XVIII; no. 1877 from Century XIX; no. 2221 from century XVIII; no. 3306 from century XVIII (years 1777-1778); and no. 3607 dating from the Century XVIII.

### **Hieromonk Nicephorus Theotokis towards Readers**

It was appropriate that not even Isaac the Syrian to hide on himself until the end. Therefore, by remaining undiscovered for many centuries, he has been waiting for him who was to discover him and make him known. And who was that one it is shown limpidly by the facts. He was not unskilled in what he wrote, neither one who tastes only by the tip of his lips the *Words* of Saint Isaac, but he was a good knower and one who imparted himself to the satiation with them and who studies them in a consummate manner, somebody who was tall in virtue, rich on knowledge, tireless in the zeal for the good things and in the fruitful work of what can be useful to anybody. This was the Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem, Ephraem, the true and legit descendant, and not less in virtue, in the chair of Jacob, the brother of the Lord.

This one, by finding in the Lavra of Saint Sava from Palestine, the letters of Isaac, he studied them with a trained attention. And researching them, he didn't stand not to share them with others too. And the task of editing the work fell on me. It was something that I couldn't refuse, though I knew it was tiresome. I accepted that task for the worthiness and for the virtue of the man and for the duty and special veneration I have for him. By accepting the task of this work, I am going to firstly speak briefly about Isaac, and then about his works and about the present edition.

Issac, by being born in East, where sprouted out and started from all the things of the salvation, he was Syrian according to his name, and his country was Nineveh<sup>5</sup>. We do not know who were his parents. By parting with the world from

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<sup>5</sup> "Assemani, in "Bibliotheca orientalis", tome I, p. 463, and the author of the *Foreword* say that Isaac was born, grew up, and studied in Mesopotamia, not far from Edessa".

his early youth, and since the age of his flourishing he entered - with a blood brother - the monastery called Mar Mathew, when many live an angelic life while in body, he embraced the monastic countenance and the lonely life. By accustoming on himself there with the toils of the asceticism, and by reaching a satisfying measure of the virtue, he felt himself dominated by the longing for a deeper appeasement, and he felt his heart burning by the fire of the reclusion. So, by leaving far from the coenobitic community and dwelling in a monastic cell somewhere in the wilderness, he lives a totally lonely and unmixed life, by thinking only at himself and a God. His brother, by being appointed to rule the already mentioned monastery, he didn't cease to ask him, in insistent letter, to leave the wilderness and to come back to monastery<sup>6</sup>. But he attached on himself so much to the wilderness, so that he didn't want to part with it even for a short while. But what the prayer of the mentioned brother didn't succeed in, it was done later by the doglike unveiling<sup>7</sup>. But not listening to his blood-brothers, though that one was urging him to turn back into monastery, he obeyed the Father who called him from above, but accepting the care of steering the ship of the Church of the Ninevites. So, he left the wilderness which longing was still burning within his heart, and he accepted to be ordained as Bishop of Nineveh. This was because he ought not to hide the light under the bushel of the wilderness, but he ought to place it in the candlestick of the shepherding, and to spread the shiny rays of its enlightening power as far as possible. But that happened for a very short time, because he barely saw the light rising and he withdrew again. It seems that the world wasn't worthy of this man. It happened to him what it happened yore to the godlike Gregory the Theologian, who, when he was ordained as Bishop of Sasime, he thought to run away immediately after his ordination, and that seems to them who love God as not happening because of an unrestraint thought of self-loving (and therefore neither condemnable), but because of the

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<sup>6</sup> "The second of his *Epistles* contains his answer to his brother, but it is entitled *Towards a Natural and Spiritual Brother Who Lives Within World*, either for he mentioned the coenobitic community as world (because by calling his brother not only natural but also spiritual, it is proven that that one was a monk), or for Isaac had another brother who lived within world".

<sup>7</sup> Nicephorus Theotokis refers again to a place from the *Foreword* belonging to the anonymous, that follows in his edition.

consummation of the men. For these ones were without blemish in the other things and impossible to be condemned and ghost-bearers. And he who is spiritual, he judges all things but he won't be judged by anyone.

And what happened then to his was this: on the very day that his ordination take place, he was sitting at the house of the bishopric, when two individuals came to him, one complaining about a credit he granted, and the another admitting that he owed that but asking for a short postponing of the payback. But the creditor told him: "If he refuses to pay me immediately, I am going to give him in the hands of the judge". The godlike Isaac told him: "If, according to the commandment of the Holy Gospel, you must not ask even for the things taken from you, all the more you must endure and give him one more day to pat you what he owes you". But that one answered mercilessly: "Forgive about those of the Gospels". Then Isaac said: "If this one doesn't obey the commandments of the Gospel and of the lord, what am I myself going to do here?". And by seeing that his lie accustomed to silence, non-troubled and undisturbed, it followed to be scattered and troubled with worries, he withdrew from the episcopal chair and turned back to his beloved monastic cell into wilderness, where he remained until his death. And how many battles he fought against the devils and against his body and how great he reached to be in his virtue, in that one required by the doer life and by the seer (contemplative) life, and what consummation of his soul he reached at, and how much grace he enjoyed while still alive, it is superfluous to say. This is because these things can be easily found out from his writings.

This is for in the *Word XXIII* he says: "As he who doesn't see with his eyes the sun, he won't be able to describe the sunlight to somebody only by hearing about it, likewise is him who hasn't tasted with his soul the sweetness of the spiritual deeds". And in the *Word XXVI*, he says: "By trying for a long time the things from the right side and those from the left side and by tasting on myself for many times in these two ways and by receiving countless wounds and by being found worthy of hiddenly receiving many helps, I have earned an experience of many years and I have learnt these by trying them, by the gift from God". And in the *Word XV*, he says: "I have written these for my remembrance and for everyone who read this writing, as

I received from studying the Scriptures and out of true mouths, and a little, out of the experience itself”.

Do you see how he tries everything before writing about them, and how he was a teacher with the deed of the thing taught by him. His teaching truly is godlike, by setting as foundation the higher virtue, and getting up to the peak of the consummation. That’s why the teacher too is godlike and high and consummate. This is for he tries the things he learnt from the godlike grace, and so he taught and wrote them. By not being the blesses one able to lock with the silence the powerful and all-sweet work of the grace within himself, he explained it cloudier in some places and more limpidly in other places, by saying: “Often as I was writing those, my fingers stop on the paper and I was unable to endure the pleasure occurring within my heart, one that silenced my senses”.

But we owe also to wonder about this virtue of this man: while separated from all people, he was being sweetened with the love for them, as himself confesses. This is for he says: “My beloved ones, because I have made on myself crazy, I do not stand to keep my secret in silence, but I make myself crazy (he talks here as the Saint Apostle did: “I have made myself crazy by praising on myself” (1 Cor. 11: 11), for the benefit of the brothers. This is for this is the true love, that one that cannot stand to keep a secret from its brothers”. This is for he was overflowing waves of wisdom even from wilderness, which he was abundantly watering the brothers’ souls, by ceaselessly springing wisdom to them.

An anonymous<sup>8</sup>, by telling briefly the things referring to Isaac, he says these words: “By being teacher to the monks and savior shore to everyone, he wrote four books of much beauty ibn speaking”.

The same one talks also about the times which Isaac live in: “This saint lives at the beginning of the seventh thousand of years since the creation of the world”. These ones are in accordance to what Isaac says: “You are dogmatizing against the things existing from six thousands of years”. From here is obvious that when he wrote have passed six thousands of years

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<sup>8</sup> “These ones are preserved in the codices form the Library of Vatican, written in Arab and Syriac, in the *Introduction* of the four books of Isaac, which I am going to speak about further on. These ones have been translated in Latin by the Syrian Maronite Assemani. Out of these I have selected those said about Isaac”.

since the world has been created. But we can find out in more details from His epistle sent to the wonderful Simeon. This is for he lived for seventy-five years, or since the year 4 of Emperor Justin the Old, who were in the year 521 since Savior Christ, until the year fifteen of Emperor Mauritius, namely A.D. 596<sup>9</sup>. And because Simeon was very young when he embraced the living on a pillar, and Isaac appears as an adviser in his epistle and he presents Simeon the first rules of the appeasement life<sup>10</sup>, so Isaac sent him his epistle before Simeon climbed on that pillar, out of this one can easily see that Abba Isaac was around the year 534 or the godlike oikonomia, in the prime of his life, being him consummate not only in his virtue but also in his age. So, even if he reached a very old age, he moved to the tents, without any doubt, before A.D. 600.

Some people mistakenly reckoned that our Isaa is that whose life was describes by one among saints Gregory the Dialogue<sup>11</sup>. The whole his life, our Issac moved from his country to monastery, from monastery to wilderness, and from wilderness to Nineveh and, from here, to wilderness again. While that one moved from East to West, namely from Syria to Italy, at Spoleto. And we also can sharply distinguish between the two men from the epistle sent to Simeon. The Dialogue says that his Isaac came to Italy without his disciples knowing about that, and he changed his name during the first years of the Goths' rule, which must be understood as close to A.D. 541, when Totilas started to rule Italy, and he lived until the last years, namely until 553, when Teios was killed and Italy got rid of the Goths' rule. This Isaac hid his real name and he was expose only by the unclean ghost he cast out of somebody. So, it seems untrue, or it is even impossible to admit, that during those years, Simeon, who lived as a monk in the wonderful mountain from near Antioch, to would have written to Isaac in Spoleto, where Isaac was unknown, and Isaac to would have answered Simeon. These things, concerning Isaac. And in the followings, we are going to talk about his writings.

About the fact that the true father of these rules of the asceticism, published now, this Isaac confesses, together with the two codices which we own, and the old codex preserved in Lavra

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<sup>9</sup> "Fabricius, in "Bibliotheca graeca", the book 5, chapter 34, p. 279".

<sup>10</sup> Ep. 4.

<sup>11</sup> "*Dialogi, libr. 3*, chapter 14".

of our pious father Sava, from Palestine (that one could have been written by our pious father Abraham and Patrik, and that was read by the all-blessed Patriarch, as I said, for many times, while he was living there; then there is that one from Corfu City, from the Monastery of the Saint Martyr Ecaterina, one seen by myself; likewise, that one from the Cesarian Library<sup>12</sup>. The title of this one is the following: "Of the One Among Saint Our Father Abba Isaac the Syrian, the Hermit, Who Was Bishop of the Loving of God City of Nineveh, Words about Ascesis, Interpreted by Our Pious Fathers, Abba Patrik and Abba Abraham, Philosophers and Hesychasts from the Lavra of the One among Saints Our Father Sava. The Word Comprised by It are 87 in Number".

Then there is that one too, from the Coisliniana Library, bearing the name of Isaac the Syrian, the hermit and the Bishop of Ninevah, and comprising 92 *Words*, which are comprised among also scholia from the words of form the writings of: Anastasius, Antioch, Anthony, Arsenius, Athanasius, Barsanuphius, Basil, the Bulgarian (Theophylact), Abba Cario, the Carpathian, John Chrysostom, John Climacus, Copris, Cyril, Diadochus, Dorotheos, Ephraem, Isaiah, Evagrius, Gregory the Theologian, Hesychius, John the Monk, Josephus, Isidoros, Abba Longinus, Makarios, Mark, Maximos, Nilus, Abba Nisterus, Abba Peter, Peter of Alexandria, Poemen, Abba Sisoies, Simeon, Thalassius, Theodor Nonus, Zigabenos, and Zosimus<sup>13</sup>. This is a truly precious codex, and if it was available to me, it would be very useful to the present edition. We have also to mention the codices from the Library of the Vatican, no. 23, 101, 505, and 737, each of them containing 98 *Words*, translated from Syriac to Grek by Patrik and Abraham, monks from Saint Sava Monastery<sup>14</sup>. The catalogue of the manuscripts from England describes 99 *Words about Ascesis*, translated in Greek by Abraham and Isaac (Patrik is wrongly called as Isaac or a Cave), monks from Saint Sava Monastery<sup>15</sup>. It also mentions three other writings belonging to the same

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<sup>12</sup> "I saw that one a few months ago, and I compered back then some of the interpretations with those from this edition and I found them as identical. I was impeded from doing a thorough comparison by the careful librarian Kollar".

<sup>13</sup> "This one is mentioned by Montfaucon, *Bibliotheca graeca*, the book 5, chapter 41, p. 471".

<sup>14</sup> "Assemani, in "Bibliotheca orientalis", tome I, p. 446.

<sup>15</sup> "At the p. 35, no. 256, and at the p. 44, no. 295".

Isaac, written in Syriac, and preserved in Codex 72 from Bodleian Library<sup>16</sup>.

And Ebed Iesha writes in the catalogue of the Chaldean books: "Issac the Ninevite composed seven tomes about the ruling of the ghost, about the godlike mysteries, about judgments, and about living"<sup>17</sup>. We cannot tell if that is another Issac than our Isaac, or if there were other writings belonging to our Issac. We cannot tell if the tomes on the godlike mysteries and on the judgment are lost, or if they are preserved somewhere and we do not know where. The *Words* on the rule of the ghost, namely on the soul, may be the same with the *Words* 56, 57, and 59 from another edition, while the *Words* about living may be the same with the *Words* 1, 9, and 10, about the monastic living, from the present edition.

Mentioning about these seven tomes, Assemani says in "Bibliotheca orientalis" composed by him: "We reckon that one of these tomes was written in Syrian, and four other books, immediately after, in Arabic". He presents, in the first place, the four books from the Syrian, Arab, and Greek Codices, from the Vatican Library, studies by him. Among those ones, from the first one he gives 28 titles of *Words*, together with their beginnings: from the second one 45, from the third one 44, and from the fourth one 25 (he mentioned also which ones are preserved only in Arabic, or only in Syrian, or only in Greek). Then he speaks about the tome, saying: "In the Library of the Maronite Gymnasium (from Rome) there is a manuscript divided in nineteen writings, whose title is: "Common books for all nations, or about the cause of all causes". Its beginning is: "You eternal God, You Who are from eternity without beginning and always unchangeable". This sufficiently shows that that is the product of a certain Isaac, Bishop of Edessa, and not of the Bishop of Nineveh.

And the 138 *Words* from the four books (I mean also their titles and beginnings), some of them are the same with these edited now, and others are part of these. Others have the same title, but a different beginning; other, on the opposite; and others seem to totally differ.

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<sup>16</sup> "Fabricius, "Bibl. Graeca", book no. 5, chapter 41, p. 17).

<sup>17</sup> "Idem, *ibid*".



By indicating here the four mentioned books, we have placed them at the end of the book<sup>18</sup>. We have given in Greek the titles and the beginning of the *Words* reckoned as inedited here, by mentioning also the codices comprising them; at each *Word* from those given in the present edition, we have noted aside also the identical one from the four books. Thus, everybody can recognize the edited and inedited *Words* belonging to our Pious Isaac<sup>19</sup>.

But neither in the Greek codices mentioned before the number of the *Words* is the same in all of them. In some of them this number is bigger, as this from the present edition. But the quantity of the content of the *Words* can be the same in all of them, only the numbers being inequal, because of different division. Also, between the two codices of ours the number of the *Words* is inequal, but not their content, as one can see out of the numbers given in the list from the beginning of the work and out of the footnotes. The inequal division comes from the fact that some of the *Words* contain chapters, questions, answers, and prayers, and from the fact that one and the same often contains diverse themes and it is composed of several *Words*. This is for in the library of the fathers<sup>20</sup> too, there are some very large *Words* edited only in Latin (from that one we took in the present book some fragments in Latin). There one can see also a book about despising the world, which is divided in 53 chapters and it is wrongly attributed to Saint Isaac the Syrian, the presbyter from Antioch. This Issac lived under the rule of Emperor Leon the Great, who took the scepter in the year 457 and who died in the year 474. In the present edition this *Word* is composed of 15 *Words*<sup>21</sup>. And enough about these.

The two codices available to us, were written by an ancient hand from the same century and they were contemporary to that one preserved in the Cesarian Library, as one can see by comparing the letters and the paper. One of them belonged to His Eminence Neophyte Metropolitan of Arta,

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<sup>18</sup> We think that that is about the titles placed after the *Foreword*, which follow after this preface wrote by Nicephorus Theotokis.

<sup>19</sup> We are not going to give this dialogue of titles from the Edition made by Theotokis, because we reckon that the problem of the identity of the *Words* from the diverse codices remains to be accomplished by him who will undertake a critical edition of the work of Saint Isaac.

<sup>20</sup> "*Bibliotheca Patrum*, ed. Lyon, tome 11".

<sup>21</sup> Namely: *Word* 23, and the list is: 5, 56, 21, 11, 22, 13, 24, 85, 27, 46, 17, 72, and 18".

who left the metropolitanate and dies in ascesis, not so long ago, in Athos, and who gave this codex to the all-taught teacher, Pious Neophyte, the hiero-deacon from Peloponnese; the second codex belonged to all-taught predicator Agapius, the protos of the Saint Nicholas Church from Galata, and I do not know where he obtained from. I uses the second one, that one belonging to Agapius, as a prototype, and from the first one I noted some differences of small importance. In this one is placed, before Isaac *words*, also the *Foreword* about silence and quietude, which is given in Neophyte's manuscript only an abstract written by a newer hand, and in the common dialect.

The content of this *Foreword* (which was printed here for it offers some short data on Isaac) it is childish, and the *Word* is prolix and the use of the quotes from the Holy Scripture is inappropriate. Its composition lacks the skillfulness, and it follows a disordered listing, which the author strives to cover it up by adding a vain-speaking, attempting to reconcile the irreconcilable thing<sup>22</sup>.

Who could be this one: Abraham or Patrik? This is for it seems very plausible that they who translated Isaac's writings they also wanted to praise him. Besides, itself the translation of the *Words* we reckon it as on a very low level, maybe done verbatim and totally disregarding the grammar rules. From here comes also the big lack of clarity of the *Words*. Experiencing difficulties to understand them, we have attempted, not by an arbitrary will but with the approval from His Beatitude Patriarch, to solve that lack of clarity as much as possible, by adding notes, and by correcting not a few obvious and easy to fix mistakes<sup>23</sup>.

But because in the two codices of ours there is not the same chaining of the *Words* and there is a different order in the

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<sup>22</sup> It might be that Theotokis' appreciations are too harsh. But it is right that: the *Word* eposes in a too prolix manner the theme of the silence. That's why are not going to give in this volume that *Foreword*. A contrary, the text printed in the year 1819 at Neamț, and the newer one, typed, they give this *Foreword* and not that belonging to Nicephorus Theotokis.

<sup>23</sup> The corrections made by Nicephorus Theotokis in notes, being too few, we have added many more in our translation. He couldn't correct the Greek text that he was publishing according to manuscripts. We have been able to correct in the Romanian text the unclear meanings which are very frequent in the Greek text. We have given the notes belonging to Nicephorus Theotokis between quotations marks, while ours not. Some of the notes belonging to Nicephorus Theotokis give the version, sometimes different, of the codex he received from Neophyte of Arta. The text the manuscript received from Agapius, as Theotokis confesses himself.

Cesarean codex too, and there is a different order in the books published by Assemani, and even in the same ones there are also mixed the question-answer chapters and the *Epistles*, we decided to compose the present book in a different manner, so that the *Words* somewhat close to other to follow to those ones. But in the prototype, we have made no change either in division, or in titles, but we have called all of them as *Words*, except the *Epistle*. But one must know that neither the second one nor the seventh one are written by our Isaac, as Assemani confesses too. But the first one if the twentieth, the another is the eighth one of Saint John Sava the Monk, born at Nineveh and living around the middle of the sixth century of the oikonomia into body, in the monastery called Dilaiti<sup>24</sup>, from beyond Tiger.

Therefore, by God called and pious fathers (though Isaac's urges are characteristic and appropriate especially to us), you who have taken on your shoulders the gentle yoke of Christ, with spiritual love, in the coenobitic communities from Palestine and from Mount Sinai and in the great monasteries and hermitages and reclusories from Athos and from elsewhere, and you have decided to appease on yourselves and to bear the angelic live into your bodies, you who have touched the first steps of that ladder that climbs to heavens, and you who have touched the middle of that ladder, and you who have reached the highest step of that ladder, the ones from now and the ones from after those – you have this holy book as bet adviser in the whole work of the ascesis. This is for this book explains very well the true rejection of the world and from the things from within world, the knowledge of all the temptations coming from him who wages war to us, the detailed description of the much-intertwined passions, the prayer of the mind and the souly ascension, the consummation into ascesis and into appeasement and, shortly speaking, all the seer and doer virtues. This book explains in details the most secret states and works of the monastic living, which are presented cleanly and they are made known only by experience. By reading this book, you ask for rich rewards for him who was the cause of this edition: His Beatitude Patriarch Ephraem. And to me (if I

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<sup>24</sup> We haven't been able to identify the original name, neither and eventual English translation, so that we have transliterated the name according to the source text in Romanian.

contributed with something), it will be enough what is usually said about us: "May God forgive him".

But once I have reached here, I won't hesitate, by being forced by the duty for telling the truth, to mention what is worthy to say and to mention. Nectarios and Dositheos and Hrisant the forever remembered Patriarchs of the Holy City of Jerusalem, they yore composed many books too, and so they presented very useful teachings belonging to those who taught rightly the word of the truth, and powerful weapons against those who deviated from the right-faith. His Beatitude Ephraem, by following their example as a true descendant of theirs, he also published quite a few savior books; and I know that he is going to publish other books as well.

So, they who bring their gift to the All-Holy and of-God-receiving Tomb, they are not only followers of the example of the old and pious Christians who saved and gathered for Jerusalem their savings on a Saturday (1 Cor. 16: 2), but they are also defenders of those all-honored Places, being done the fulfilling of the piousness of the believers, the all-clear proof of the divine-human oikonomia of the Word, Dog, and Man, and the praise and the shininess of the nation of the right-believers, but also defenders of the orphans and of the widows from there, and of the poor, and upholders of many souls menaced by shortcoming and needs, upheld by their piousness and delivered by the help granted them by the of-Life-receiver-Tomb. And above all of these they showed themselves as upholders and benefactors of the general accomplishment of the Church. This is for by their gift, Their Beatitudes Patriarch publish books which can be useful to all every right-believer soul. Therefore, ones like these, they are going to be, obviously and doubtlessly, be imparted with the thousandfold rewards of the Great Rewarder. This is for they bring Him a consummate, holy, well-pleasant, and fruitful gift<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> "In *Bibliotheca orientalis*, tome I, pp. 456 and 457".

**Of the One among Saints  
Our Father**

**Isaac the Syrian**

**Ascetic and Hermit, He Who Was  
Bishop of the Loving-of-God City  
Nineveh**

**Words about Asceticism**



**Words about Ascesis  
Written in His Maternal  
Language and Translated<sup>26</sup> by  
our Loving of Wisdom and  
Appeasement Fathers, Abba  
Patrik and Abba Abraham,  
Who Lived in Quietude in the  
Lavra of the One Among  
Saints Our Father Sava**

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<sup>26</sup> “In manuscript is added: *in the Greek language*”.

## Word I

### About Rejection and about the Monastic Living

The fear of God is the beginning of the virtue. And about it they say that it is the fruit of the faith and it sown within heart when the mind parts with the scattering within world, by gathering its thoughts - which wander because of the scattering - into the cogitation at the future resettlement<sup>27</sup>. This is for nothing helps somebody better than setting the foundation of the virtue, that keeping on himself stranger to the things of the life and remaining in the law of the light of those holy and straight paths, which the Psalmist mentioned, into Ghost. This is because there hardly is a man able to bear this honor<sup>28</sup>, or maybe there isn't somebody everywhere, even if he would be equal to the angels. And this is because of quickly receiving the change, as somebody would say.

The beginning of the way of the life consists of the mind cogitating at the word of God and to live in poverty. This is for the watering with these words help to consummation into poverty. Or the escape provided by the cogitation at the words of God it will help you to achieve the poverty. And achieving the poverty will give you resting, so that you will achieve the cogitation at the words of God. And these two will help you climbing, in a short time, the steps of the entire building of the virtues.

No one can come closer to God except by getting far from the world. And I call as getting far from the world not the getting out with the body, but the getting far from the world's things. This virtue consists of resting or emptying the thought of the world's things. This is because the heart cannot get appeased, neither can the heart be delivered of imaginings, as long as the senses work; neither the bodily passions stay non-working nor the evil thoughts cease except in wilderness. But until the soul achieves the drunkenness of the faith in God, by receiving the

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<sup>27</sup> Restoration in the state had by mind at the beginning.

<sup>28</sup> He who received honors from people he will hardly be able to escape the traps of the pride. That's why the Master of everybody deplores him who is praised by people, by saying: "Woe to you, when all the people will speak well about you".



power of feeling it, that soul won't be able to heal the weakness of his senses<sup>29</sup>, neither will that soul be able to powerfully step over the content of the seen things, which is a separating wall in front of the inward realities. Neither can be felt before that the rational fruit of the self-control. And shunning from sins it is the fruit of both of those. Without the first one there cannot be the second one too; and when the second one steps rightly, there it is controlled the third one too<sup>30</sup>.

When the grace gets multiplied within man, then, by aspiring to righteousness, he easily despises the fear of death<sup>31</sup>, and his soul urges him to endure the trouble for the fear of God<sup>32</sup>. And all the things which can harm the body and all the things unexpectedly coming upon the nature and are added as suffering, they are reckoned as nothing in the eye of the soul, in comparison to those realities hoped even since now.

It will be impossible to us to know the truth, if there don't come upon us the temptations out of lenience<sup>33</sup>. And if one receives this entrustment, he will understand how much taking-of-care God has for man and that there is no man not being under His taking-of-care; and that God's taking-of-care looks in a luminous manner especially at them who search for Him and He bears their suffering for Him as He would point His finger at them.

But when the lack of the grace gets multiplied within man, then the things opposite to the things mentioned by us they will be close to that man. Then the knowledge will be bigger than the faith, because of the inquiring, and that man won't trust God in anything. One like this is under them who

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<sup>29</sup> The drunkenness of the faith is a power from God, a power that overwhelms the tendency of the senses towards the external realities, by giving the soul power to see and to attach on himself to the inward realities and, through those, to God.

<sup>30</sup> "The father maybe tells this: that out of the getting far from the world and out of the drunkenness of the faith it comes the shunning of sins. This means that they who part with the world and who are filled up with faith, they will escape the snares of the sin. The first one, he says, is the separation from the world; the second one is the drunkenness of the faith; the third one is the self-control. He also adds that: without the separation from the world nobody can be filled up with faith. And within that soul who has been filled up by with faith, the self-control is kept under control by the fear of God".

<sup>31</sup> The aspiration to "righteousness" is that aspiration to all virtues. When the grace of God is being multiplied within man, the man despises the fear of death, in his fiery striving for achieving the virtues.

<sup>32</sup> The fear of God strengthens the man against the fear of death.

<sup>33</sup> Out of the lenience of God for our strengthening.

aim their arrows at him, during the moonless night, and he is stalked about those ones.

The fear of God is the beginning of the true life of the man. But this one cannot persist within soul together with the scattering. This is for the heart will part with the sweetness of God when serving to the senses. This is for the meanings of the inward realities are impeded by senses, which should serve them.

The doubt of the heart brings fear to the soul. And the faith can strengthen the decision even at the time of cutting off the limbs. As long as the body's lust overwhelms within you, you won't be able to achieve the good daring and the lack of fear towards the many resistances rising in your way towards the desired One.

He who lusts for honor he won't be able to escape the traps of the sadness. This is for there is not man in the middle of the changing things, who does not receive in his cogitation the changing of the present things. While the lust is a poison to the senses, let be silent them who say that the guard the peace of their mind together with the scattering.

Wise is not him who says that into toil and in the time of the fight and of the war cease the ugly thoughts within him, but wise is him who in the truth of his heart he wises up the sight of his mind, in order this mind not to shamelessly look at the debauched thoughts. That one, into the decency of his conscience, even when he confesses through the look of his eyes what belong to the faith, the shame still hangs over as a curtain over the hidden place of the thoughts. This one guards his righteousness as a wise virgin, through his faith into Christ. Nothing is so appropriate to remove from the soul the thoughts of the debauchery which dominated the soul before, and to banish away the awakened memories moving through his body and igniting the flame of the disturbance, as there is the diving into the desire of the learning and of the walking on the traces of the deep of the meanings of the godlike Scriptures. When the thoughts will be sunk into the sweetness of the searching for the wisdom gathered into the treasuries of the words, with the decision to wither up from within them what they have as appearances, the man will leave behind the world and he will forget about all the things from within world and he will erase from his soul all the memories which bring the images, and often even the thought of the usual natural needs. And the soul

himself will persevere in this getting beyond himself in the answers coming from the great mystery of the Scriptures<sup>34</sup>.

But even if the mind floats at the surface of the waters, namely on of the sea of the godlike Scriptures, and the mind cannot sink its understanding into the entire depth of this sea, in order to understand all the treasures from its deep, it will suffice to the mind even a research done with longing, in order to tie up its thoughts powerfully into the sole thought of the wondering, in order to impede them to run towards the body's nature, as said somebody among the wisemen into the godlike things. This is because the heart is delicate and it cannot endure the evilness coming from those who are outside and from the wars from inside. And you know that the evil thought presses heavy<sup>35</sup>. And if the heart doesn't occupy on itself with the knowledge<sup>36</sup>, it won't be able to endure the disturbance caused by the body's urge. And as the weight of the burden on one hand of the scale it will quickly attracts the needle's leaning, and it won't obey the wind's need, likewise the shameful thing and the fear they will attract the cogitation. And as accepting the shameful thing and the fear become to the mind, on their measure, a cause for relentless wandering, and now the needle of the scales' arm, by getting disturbed, it moves from here to there, likewise the self-control increases on the measure of the removal of the fear from the heart.

Finally, as both sides of the scales are weighed with a bigger weight and so the scales won't wobble under the blowing of the wind, likewise the mind weighed under the fear of God and under the shame won't be moved easily by those who shake it<sup>37</sup>. And to the extent of receiving the fear within mind, to the same extent the mind will be overtaken by motion and change.

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<sup>34</sup> Saint Issac proved to be a great poet in expressing his thoughts. The Scripture's words have at surface the pleasant moisture of the juicy countenances of the things which serve as images to some dry incorporeal meanings. The mind passes from ecstasy to ecstasy, as there occur answers to the mind, and new happenings into the endless sea of meanings of the Scripture's words.

<sup>35</sup> The evil, envious, full of worries, lusting for pleasures thought, it is difficult to be endured, and it is difficult too to be chased away. Such a thought is relentless. Such a thought requires to be fulfilled. And by being fulfilled it will receive a new power.

<sup>36</sup> The knowledge related to the godlike meanings of the Scriptures.

<sup>37</sup> This text has some obscurities. In the first place, the shame and the fear disturb the mind, then they make the mind steadfast. Probably, in the first place was about "the shameful thing" and about the fear of death; and here is about the sentiment of shame and about the fear of God. Further on, it will again be about the shameful thing and the fear of death.

Get yourself wise and set as base for your travel the fear of God, and in a few days, you will resettle on yourself at the gate of the Kingdom, without detours on your way.

In all the things which you come across with in the Scriptures, you search for the purpose of the word, in order you to deepen into yourself, and you to understand with great understanding the deep of the meaning of the saints who, by being guided and enlightened in their life by the godlike grace, they always feel a certain ray advancing in the middle of the written things and that illuminated before their understanding, so that they can discern between the simple words and the meaning contained by those words, with much understanding, into the understanding of their soul.

To that man who reads with an empty mind the things contained in the difficult verses, his heart will be emptied and it will be quenched from within his heart the godlike power that bestows to the heart the sweetest tasting, in the wonderful understanding of the soul. Anyone uses to run towards what he is kindred with. That's why also that soul having fellowship with the Ghost, when such a soul hears some word that has within hidden a godlike power, it will fierily attract its content. Not any man is wakened up by a thing that is said spiritually and that has hidden in it a power, so that that man to wonder about that word. The word about virtue needs a heart that rests from the realities belonging to the earth and from the occupations with those. The things of the virtue do not wake up the thoughts of that man whose cogitation toils with the care for the passing things, in order him to desire them, to search for them, and to try to earn them.

The detachment from the bodily things take place before the birth of the relation with God, though at some people, in the oikonomia of the grace, this connection often precedes that detachment, like a desire hiding another desire. The rule of the oikonomia differs from the usual rule from among people. But you guard the usual rule. If the grace precedes within you, you will know that this is his will. And if not, you continue climbing towards the top of the spiritual tower, on the way traveled by all people, which the climbed on, according to the rule.

Everything one works is contemplation and he fulfills it through commandment for it, it is totally unseen by the body's eyes. And everyone working with the deed a joined thing, because the commandment of the deed, despite of being one, it

needs both of them: contemplation and deed, due to the bodily and incorporeal realities. But the joining of the two one, it is one.

The deeds taking care of cleanness, they do not remove the memory of the past mistakes, but they will remove from the mind the memory of the sadness, and from here forwards, the coming of the memory into cogitation it will be useful.

The soul's greediness for getting rich in virtue it overwhelms the seen lust of the together-yoked body.

The measure is the adornment of everything. This is because, without measure, even the things reckoned as good they will be damaging.

Do you want to have fellowship (communion) with God in your mind, in achieving that feeling of the pleasure that is not enslaved by senses? - pursuit the mercy that, when it is within you, it will take within you the image of that Holy Beauty which you have become alike to. The most comprising trait of the mercy plants within you, without the mediation of a certain time, in addition to the union into glory and shininess, also the impartation with godhead.

The spiritual union is an unsealed memory burning within your heart with a fiery longing, by taking the power of the connection out of persevering near to commandments, not by wrongly employing those, neither naturally. This is for within them there is the life-give-food for strengthening the souly sight. Through that it comes within our heart the first kidnapping, in order our heart to close its twofold senses: the bodily senses and the soul senses.

There is not other path towards the spiritual live, that paints the unseen image, except that starting with the mercy, as our Lord told us. That leads towards the consummate Father. This is for he commanded so to them who obey Him, to place the mercy as foundation<sup>38</sup>.

Other is the word of the deed and other is the beautiful word. And without trying the things the wisdom won't know how to adorn its words and how to speak the truth, because of not knowing the truth. Neither could one unveil the virtue if he

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<sup>38</sup> "Where did the Lord command? In: "be yourselves merciful, as your Father is merciful" (Lk. 6: 36) and in: "If you want to be consummate, go, sell your wealth and give it to the poor and you will have a treasure in heavens, and, by coming, follow Me" (Mt. 19: 21) and in: "Be therefore consummate, as your Father in heavens is consummate" (Mt. 5: 41).

has never experienced it. The word out of deed is a treasury of the hope, while the non-doing wisdom is a repository of shame.

As an artist paints the water on the walls but he cannot quench his thirst with that image of the water, and like a man having nice dreams, likewise is the non-doer word. He who talks out of his experience about virtue, he shares it to the listener as somebody shares the money he earned.

And he who sows the teaching out of the things he earned, in the ears of them who listen to him, he daringly opens his mouth towards his spiritual sons, as the old James who told to Joseph: "Lo, I have given you a bigger share than those of the brothers; it is that share that I took with my sword and with my bow from Amorites" (Gen. 48: 22).

Each man having a defiled life he lusts for the temporary life. And such a man is lacking the knowledge. Well said someone that the fear of death saddens that man who is burdened by his conscience; and he who has within himself the good witness he desired the death as the life. Do not reckon as true wiseman him who enslaves his cogitation to this life, because of his cowardice and fear. You reckon that all the good and the ab things happening to the body are like some dreams. This is for not only at the time of your death you will be untied of them, but often even before your death they forsake you and they leave. But reckon those which have any partaking with your soul as being your riches in this life and that they will go with you in the future life<sup>39</sup>. And if they are good, you give thanks to God in your thought, and if they are evil, get sad and sigh and search for being delivered of them while you still are into your body. Any good thing you have it working within you, you keep it hidden. And the baptism and the faith have become mediators to you towards this good, for through them you have been called by our Lord Jesus Christ to His good deeds, together with the Fathers and with the Holy Ghost Whom are due the glory, the honor, the thanks, and the worshipping, forever and ever. Amen.

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<sup>39</sup> Thew things transforming your soul according to their image in this life and which will belong to the soul after death too. The evil things will make your soul forever lacking God, while the good things will keep your soul forever good and united with God Who is the spring of the kindness.

## Word II

### **About the Rejection of the World and about the Restraining from the Daring towards the People**

When we want to run away from the world and to become strangers to the worldly things, nothing separates us so much from the world and nothing kills so much the passions from within us and nothing wakes up us and reinvigorates us so much towards the spiritual things, as the crying and the pain of the heart do, joined with the right-reckoning. This is for the face of the shy one takes as example the face of the Loved One. And again, nothing makes us spending so much time within world with the drunkards and with the profligates, and nothing separates us so much from the treasures of the wisdom and of the knowledge of the mysteries of God, as the laughter and the scattering, joined with the daring. These are the occupations of the devil of the fornication.

So, because I have tested your love for wisdom, I beg you, my beloved, with love, to guard yourself against the temptation from the enemy, and you to avoid cooling down your soul by uttering unrestraint jokes, because that takes your souls off the warmth of the love for Christ Who has tasted for you gall on the wood of the Cross, and instead of the sweetness and of the daring according to God, you to fill your soul up with many imaginings and to enslave your soul, still being you awake, but also sleeping, to the indecent dreams whose stench the angels can't stand, and so you to become cause for falling to others, and spear to yourself. Therefore, force on yourself to follow the example of Christ, so that the fire He throw within you to burn even stronger<sup>40</sup>, a fire which all the world's movements are uprooted by, world's movements which kill the new man and which make dirty the courts of the strong and holy Lord. This is for I am daring to say, according to Saint Paul, that "we are the church of God" (1 Cor. 3: 16). Let's therefore clean up His church, as He is clean too, so that he will desire to dwell within it. Let's sanctify it as He is saint too. Let's adorn it with all the

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<sup>40</sup> It is worthy to be notice this connection made by Saint Isaac between humbleness and the fire of the love. He who loves he doesn't know about himself, likewise the humble one. On the opposite, the proud one doesn't know except about himself, and therefore he is unloving.

good and honored deeds. Let's burn inside it the incense of the resting of His will, through the clean and out of heart prayer, that cannot be achieved while being imparted with the ceaseless worldly movements. And so, the cloud of the His glory will overshadow within our soul, and the light of His glory will shine within our heart. And so all of them who inhabit the tent of God will be filled up with joy and gladness. And they who are daring and shameless will be deprived of the flame of the Holy Ghost.

So, you always condemn on yourself, brother. And say: "Woe to me, my soul, that your detachment from the body has come nigh. Why do you enjoy the things which you are going to leave today and which sight you are going to miss forever? Take heed at the things from ahead, and you think at your deeds, how and which are with you and whom you have spent the days of your life with, or who have received the labor of your plowing, and whom you have make glad in your arena, so that to come out and welcome you in the time of your exit. Whom have you delighted with your running, so that you will find resting at his shore? For whose sake you have been living in asceticism, so that you to reach him into joy? Whom have you gained as your friend in the age to come, so that him to welcome you at the time of your exit? What field you have worked and who will pay you at the sunset, namely at the separation from your body?

Examine on yourself, (soul), and see what sine your part will be at, and if you have been working to the end in that field that sprout out bitterness to them who work it, and you shout out with pain and with sigh towards God Who is resting above your sacrifices and burnt offerings. Let's painful words gush out of your mouth, which to delight the holy angels. Let your cheeks take the color of the crying, so that the Holy Ghost to rest within you and Him to wash you up of the defilements of your evilness. You reconcile the Lord with your tears, so that He will come to you. You call Marta and Mary to teach you the words of the crying. You shout out towards the Lord?



Prayer<sup>41</sup>

Lord Jesus Christ, our God Who cried for Lazarus and Who shed tears of sadness on him, receive the tears of my bitterness. Heal with Your sufferings my passions. Heal with Your wound my wounds. Clean up with Your blood my blood and mix withing my body the fragrance of Your life-make-body. Let the gall which Your enemies watered you to sweeten my soul by delivering my soul from the bitterness which my enemy has watered me with. Let you body stretched on the wood of the cross to wing up my mind towards You, for it is draw downwards by the devils. Let Your head that You leaned downwards on the cross to raise up my head that is slapped by enemies. Let your hands, nailed on the cross by disbelievers, to raise me up towards You, out of the perdition pit, as Your all-holy mouth promised us. Let Your gave that received hits and spitting from the cursed one, to fill up with shininess my face defiled by lawlessness. Let Your soul, that, while You was on the cross, You have surrendered it to Your Father, to guide me towards You by Your grace. I do not have a pained heart towards my searching, I do not have repentance either pricking of the heart, which bring the sons back to their inheritance. I do not have, Master, comforting tears. My mind has been darkened by the things of this world and it cannot look at You into pain. My heart has been cooled down by the multitude of the temptations and it cannot get warm by the tears of the love for You. But, Lord Jesus Christ, God, the Treasurer of the good things, bestow me whole repentance and pained heart, so that I go out with the whole my soul searching for You. This is because without You I will stray myself away from all good. Therefore, You the Kind One, bestow me Your grace. Let Your Father Who gave You birth out of His bosoms, timelessly and eternally, to renew within me the icon of Your image. I have forsaken You; You don't forsake me! I have left You; come out and search for me and take me to Your pastures, and count me up among the sheep of Your chosen flock, and feed me up with the greenery of Your godlike mysteries, so that my heart to become their dwelling place and my heart to see in itself the shininess of Your unveilings, that is the comforting and the reinvigoration of those who have been toiling for You in troubles and in all sorts of hardships! May us too be found worthy of this shininess by the grace and by the love for people of our Savior Jesus Christ! Amen.

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<sup>41</sup> This subtitle isn't in the original manuscripts. This title was added by the editor Nicephorus Theotokis.

### Word III

**About the Withdrawal into Wilderness. And that We Must not Fear, but We Must Teach Our Heart on the Trust in God and We to Dare with Doubtless Faith, as Ones Who Have God as Our Upholder and Guardian**

If you ever feel that you are prepared for your withdrawal into loneliness, into the kingdom of the freedom, whose tasks are easy, let not the thought of your fear pushing you, as it usually does, in all sorts of changes and twisting of your thoughts, but rather be trustful that your Guardian is with you, and you willingly entrust on yourself into your wisdom, that you and the whole creation are under the sole Master Who moves and shakes and tames and organizes all the things with a sole approval; and that no together-servant can harm any of His together-servants without the decision of Him Who takes care of and governs everything. And stand up immediately and dare. This is for, despite some people were given approval on some things, they haven't been given approval in all things. This is for neither the devils nor the deadly wild beasts, neither the people mastered by evilness could accomplish their will started towards destruction and killing, if the will of Him Who governs all the things doesn't allow them, and He give them a certain place to work. This is for He doesn't allow their freedom to come to the whole work. This is because if it was differently, nobody would be able to live. Our Lord doesn't allow the power of the evils and of the people to come close to His creation and to accomplish their will in it.

That's why, tell always to your soul: "I have a Guardian Who guards me and no creature can appear to me without His commandment". Believe truly that they don't dare even to show themselves to your eyer and to make their threats be heard by your ears. And if they were allowed from above, from heavens, they would not need any word or any words and their work would fulfill their will.

And says again: "If it was the will of my Master that the evil ones to take mastery upon His creature, I wouldn't resist that for I do not want to hinder His will". And thus, in your trials, fill yourself up with joy, as one who know and who fully

feel that the will of our Lord governs you and guides you. Therefore, lean your heart on your trust into the Lord and do not fear either the fear of the night or the arrow flying during the day, “for the faith of the righteous, he says, that into God, it tames the wild beats as on some sheep” (Hebr. 11: 33).

But I am not righteous, he says, so that I could be able to trust God. But you have truly gone out for working the righteousness, in this full of troubles wilderness and that’s why you have become obedient to God’s will. Therefore, you will toil vainly by enduring those toils, if you don’t bring your trouble to God as sacrifice of our love. This is because God doesn’t want our toil for itself. This understanding is shown by all of them who love God, by troubling on themselves for their love for Him. This is for they who want to live into Christ Jesus into the fear of God, they will choose the trouble and they will endure the persecution. And He will give them the power to know His hidden treasures.

### **About the Progress Coming out of Temptations to Them Who Endure Them with Gratitude and Manhood**

This is for somebody among saints said, that there was a certain old man honored among the hermits and I once went to see him and I was sad because of my temptations. And the old man was sick and lying down. And after I bowed before him, I sat next to him and I told him: “Pray for me, father, because I am being troubled by the devils’ temptations”. And that one opened his eyes and looked at me and he told me: “My son, you are too young and God doesn’t let loose the temptations upon you”. And I told him: “I am young, but I suffer the temptations of gown up men”. That one told me again: “God will make you wise”. And I told him: “How will Him make me wise, because I taste the death daily”. That one told me again: “God loves you, shut up. God will give you His gift” (This was a war waged during sleep). Then he said again: “Know, my son, that I waged war to the devils for thirty years and until I didn’t pass the twentieth, I wasn’t helped at all. And after I succeeded in passing over the fifth year (after the twenty years mentioned), I started to find resting. And after one more year, (the resting) multiplied. And after the seventh year passed too (after the twenty), and the eighth year came, it was multiplied even more.

And after the thirtieth year passes as well and came to an end, the resting strengthened so much than I didn't know even the measure it reached at". And he added: "If I stand up to my ministration (liturgy), I will be allowed to serve a sole glory, and if I tarry to the other ones for three days, I will be with God into kidnapping and I won't feel the tiredness at all". Lo what an endless resting was born by working for a long time.

**Guarding the Tongue not Only that Wakes the Mind Up  
towards God, but It also Helps to Restraint**

There was somebody among the fathers who ate twice a week. And he told us: "On that day which I talk to somebody I am not able to keep the canon of my fasting, but I am forced to untie it". And I understood that guarding the tongue not only wakes the mind up towards God, but it hiddenly bestows a great strength for the visible deeds, worked through the body, in order those deeds to be accomplished; and it also lightens up the hidden word, as the fathers said: that the guarding of the mouth wakes up the conscience towards God, when somebody keeps his silence into knowledge.

That saint was very accustomed to the taking vigil during night. This is for he said: "During that night which I stay awake until the morning comes, after singing the psalms I rest myself. And after I wake up, on that day I am like one who no longer is in this world. And earthly thoughts do not enter my heart at all, neither I need the usual canon. And I am in kidnapping for the that whole day.

But one day I ate, because there passed four days since I ate the salt time. Therefore, I stood up from the evening service and I went to eat something, but I stopped in the yard of my monastic cell, because there was very much sun, and I stood like that until the sun rose on the next day and started warming up my face. And only when the sun started burning my face, my mind turned back to me and I saw that there was another day, and I thanked God Who pours so much grace over the man and Who make worthy of so much honor on them who follow Him. This is for only Him is due the glory forever and ever. Amen."

## **Word IV**

### **About Lusting for the World**

True is the word of our Lord, that He said, that one cannot earn the love for God in the same time with lusting for the world, neither it is possible one to achieve the partaking with God (the communion with Him) together with the partaking with the world, nor can one take care of God in the same time with the taking care of the world<sup>42</sup>: This is because when we forsake the things of God for our vain-glory, or often for the needs of our body, many of us lean towards the other side. They declare that they work for the Kingdom of Heavens, but they do not remember the Lord's commandment Who said: "If you have the whole care for the Kingdom of Heavens, I won't deprive you of the things necessary to the seen nature, but they will come to you together with the others"<sup>43</sup>. "Does He take care of the birds of the sky which have no souls, and which are created for you, and won't He take care of you?". By no means. Him who takes care of the spiritual things, or of some of them, the bodily things will be given to him without him taking care of them, when they are necessary to him and at the right time. And him who takes care of the bodily things more than he heeds to, he willingly falls from God too. So, if we strive to take care of the things which we must do for the name of our Lord, He will take care Himself of both kinds of our needs, according to the measure of our ascesis.

Therefore, let's search for the living with God not in the bodily things, while forgetting about our souls, but let's turn all our deeds towards the hope for the future things. This is for, he who once surrendered on himself to working the virtue, due to the love of his soul, and he wants to consummate the work of the virtue, he won't take care again of the bodily things, either he has those or not. Doubtlessly, God often allows that the virtuous ones to be tempted by those and He allows the

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<sup>42</sup> "Nobody can serve to lords. This I for, he either will hate one and love another; or he will follow one and he will disregard another. One cannot serve God and Mammon" (Mt. 6: 24).

<sup>43</sup> "Ask first for the Kingdom of God and for His righteousness and all of these will be added to you" (Mt. 6: 33).

temptations to raise up against them anywhere. This is for God hits them into their body as He did to Job, and He brings them to poverty and to be rejected by people, and He hits the things they have achieved. But the harm doesn't come close to their soul. It is impossible that when we walk on the way of the righteousness not to be us met by sadness and our body not to suffer of illnesses, of pains, and to remain unmoved, if we want to live into virtue. That man living according to his will, or in envy, or in the things leading him to the perdition of his soul, or in something else that hurts him, he will be condemned. But when the man walks of the way of the righteousness, and he walks his road towards God and so he gains many by making them like him, if he comes across to something like that, he must not deviate from his way, but he must accept that joyfully and without inquiring about it, and he must thank God for God has sent him that gift, and that he has been found worthy to fall for God into a trial, and for he has been found worthy of being partaker to the sufferings of the prophets, of the apostles, and of the other saints. This is for, those ones too, they endured troubles for the sake of this way, either from people, or from devils, either from their body. This is for those troubles do not come without the approval and without the lenience of God, but they come upon him in order they to become him occasions for righteousness. This is for it is impossible God to make him who wants to be with Him, to work the good things, except by bringing him some trials for the truth. And it will be impossible that this one to become worthy of the God's glory, if he doesn't enter it through temptations; and he won't rejoice of it, without the gift from Christ. This is confessed by Saint Paul, by showing that his thing is so great than he reckoned it as gift (charisma). This is for it is a great thing that somebody is prepared to suffer for his hope into God (Phil. 1: 19). This is for he says: "This was given to us from God, that not only us to believe into Christ, but also us to suffer from Him". Likewise wrote Saint Peter in his Epistle (1 Pt. 3: 14): "When you suffer for righteousness, you are happy for being followers of the sufferings of Christ". Therefore, do not rejoice when you are not tempted, and do not be sad when you are in troubles, and do not reckon these as stranger to the way to God. This is for on the way to God people walk from generation to generation through cross and death. And why do those ones come? In order you to find out that you are outside the way to God and you have left that way. Don't you

want to walk of the way of the saints, but you want to prepare for yourself another road, so that you to walk on that road without suffering?

The path to God is the daily cross, because nobody ascended to heavens in comfort (in resting). We know where the way of the resting leads us, and on him who dives into himself God doesn't want him ever to be careless. And he must take care of the truth. But he will know also out of this that he is under the care of God, for God always sends him sufferings.

But they who experience many trials they won't ever be forsaken by the taking care of God, so that they to end in the hands of the devils. This will be especially if the kiss the feet of their brothers and if they cover up their guilts and they hide up those guilts as they would have been theirs. He who wants to be in this world without care and who desires this world, but he also wants to live in virtue, he is stranger to this way. This is for the righteous not only they strive to do good deeds but they also are willingly into a great asceticism for overcoming their temptations, in order their patience to be tested. But that soul that has the fear of God, that soul won't fear anything that harms the body that soul is in. This is for that soul hopes in God since now and forever and ever. Amen.

## **Word V**

### **About the Getting Far from the World and about All the Things Disturbing the Mind**

God has given to people much honor through the twofold teaching<sup>44</sup>, which God has bestowed the knowledge through to the people and he has opened the door for us to enter to know Him. And if you want to be a faithful witness to the said things, you made on yourself such a witness and you won't perish. And if you want to know this externally, you will have another

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<sup>44</sup> Out of the twofold teaching given to people by God, one is the natural law, and another is the supra-natural law. The natural law is the power sown in their nature for knowing God through His creatures (Rom. 1: 20). And the supra-natural one is the written law, or revealed through prophets and through our Lord Jesus Christ.

teacher and witness who will guide you without straying in the way of the truth<sup>45</sup>.

The disturbed mind cannot get rid of forgetfulness and the wisdom won't open its door to such a mind. He who can see the end which all realities reach at, he won't need a teacher for rejecting the worries of the life. The natural law given to the man at the beginning by God, it can be seen in His creatures. And the written law was added after the disobedience.

He who doesn't get far willingly from the causes of his passions, he will be willingly attracted by sin. And the causes of the sin are these: wine, woman, richness, and wellness of the body. Not because these ones are sins by nature, but because their nature easily leans towards the passions of the sin. That's why the man must zealously guard on himself against those. If you always remember your weakness, you won't transgress the border that you must guard. The people hate poverty; God hates the haughty soul and the scattered mind. The people honor the richness; God honor the humble soul.

When you want to set a beginning to a good work, prepare yourself for the temptations which will be brought upon you and do not doubt about the truth. This is because that is a habit of the enemy when seeing somebody starting with a fiery faith a new living, to bring in his way diverse and fearsome temptations, for, by coming through that to fear, his good decision to get cold and him not to have a fiery zeal before starting that work pleasant to God.

Not because the enemy has such a power (because if it was so, nobody would be able to ever do the good), but the enemy is allowed by God, as we have learnt out of Job's case. So, you prepare yourself to manly meet the temptations brought in the way of the virtues, and then start working the virtues. And if you do not prepare on yourself, in advance, for receiving the temptations, you will abstain from working the virtues.

That man who doubts about God helping him in working the virtues, he will fear even his own shadow, and he will reckon on himself as hungry even in the time of the plenty and he will feel on himself full of disturbance even in the peace which he rejoices of. And he who trusts God he will be

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<sup>45</sup> The first witness is the conscience; the second witness is the external world, or the written revelation.



strengthened in his heart. And his honor will be shown to all people and his praising will be shown in front of his enemies.

The commandments of God are above all the world's treasures. And within him who has achieved these there is God. He who carefully looks at God, he will gain God as a treasurer, and he who wants to do God's wills he, he will have the angels from heavens as guides. He who fears the sins will cross unimpeded the fearsome road, and during the darkness he will find light before and within him. The Lord will guide the steps of him who fear the sins, and at the time of the sliding the mercy of God will come to help him. He who reckons that the sins are unimportant, he will fall under the sins' domination and he will take sevenfold condemnation. You sow the mercifulness with humbleness and you will reap mercy at judgment. Achieve the good in the same sides where you have lost the good. If you owe a penny to God, He won't accept from you a pearl. Thus, if you have lost your cleanness, God won't accept from you the giving of alms, until you tarry in fornication. This is for God wants from you the cleanness of your body. Once you have transgressed the commandment by not wanting to leave the world's richness, why do you fight for other commandments? Have you left a weed within you and you have started waging war against other weeds?

Saint Ephraem said not to fight the heat during summer, while wearing winter clothes. Thus, each of us will reap what he sows. And each illness will be healed with the medicines appropriate to it. And you, defeated by your envy, why do you force on yourself to fight the sleep? Pluck off the mistake while still is small and weak, before it gets widened and strengthened. Do not be careless when the mistake seems small to you. This is for that mistake will be to you a merciless master and you will walk before it as a slave in chains. And he who fight since the beginning against his passion, he will defeat that passion.

He who can endure the injustice joyfully, though he is able to reject that injustice, he will have received the comforting from God, by his faith in God. And he who endures the blames brought to him, with humble cogitation, he will have reached to consummation and the angels wonders about him. This is for not other virtue is so great and so difficult to achieve as this one is.

You won't think about yourself that you are strong, until you are tempted and you remain unchanged. Likewise, test on

yourself in all things. You achieve the right-faith within you, so that you will be able to trample on your enemies, and keep your mind unscattered; and do not trust your own power, so that you won't be left into your weakness. This is because then you will know your weakness out of your falling. Do not trust the knowledge either, lest your enemy - placing himself between you and your knowledge - will catch you in the traps of his cunningness. Have a gentle tongue and you won't meet the dishonor at all. Achieve sweet lips and you will have everybody as your friends. Do not ever praise on yourself with your tongue for your deeds, in order you not to be ashamed. This is because in that thing which the man praises with, God will allow him to get changed, in order the man to get humble and to learn the humbleness. That's why you must leave everything to the account of God's prescience and do not think that there is something unchanged in this life.

Reached thus, you will focus your eye always towards God. This is for the cover from God and His care-taking surrender all the people. But it won't be seen except by them who have cleaned up on themselves of all sins and they ceaselessly have their cogitation into God and only with God. To these ones the talking-of-care of God will be especially shown when they reach into a great temptation for God. Then they will feel that as they would see it with their bodily eyes; and each of them, on the measure and the cause of the temptation that came to them. It is shown then in order to give manhood them who fight, as it happened to Jacob, to Jesus of Navi, to the tree young men, to Peter and to the other saints, whom God showed on Himself in some human image, and that made them daring and it upheld them into faith. And if you say that those were given to the saints by God though His oikonomia and the saints have been especially found worthy of such views, let it be to you as encouraging example the holy martyrs, who often many together, and sometimes individually, and in many and diverse places, they lived in ascetic toils for Christ, and they endured mainly, by the power they received from above, in clay bodies, the cuts of the iron and all sort of torments, things above nature.

To these ones the holy angels showed themselves in a seen manner, in order each of those to find out that the godlike grace comes plentifully over them who endure in all ways the

whole trial and the whole trouble, in order their valiance to be proven and towards shaming up their enemy.

And what must we say about the ascetics who got fart from the world and about the hermits who transformed the wilderness into a city and who made the wilderness dwelling place for the angels who were always visiting them for the way of their living and as some servant of the Master they were living together with them, by having them as some together-servants! These ones were embracing the wilderness on all the days of their life, and they had their dwelling place in mountains, in caves, in the cracks of the earth, due to their love for God. And for they left the earthly things and for they love the heavenly things and for they made on themselves as followers of the angels, rightly so the holy angels didn't hide from being seen by them and they fulfilled all their requests. And the angels even showed on themselves on some occasions, and they taught them how to live. And sometimes the angels explained them certain non-understood things, and some other times the saints themselves asked the angels about what was necessary to them. And sometimes, when the saints got strayed on the road, the angels guided them, and on some other times, when the saints fell into temptation, the angels delivered them. On some other times, when a happening or a danger occurred unexpectedly, the angels kidnapped the saints from the middle of that danger, for instance by escaping them from a snake, or from a boulder ready to roll down, or from a throwing of a spear, or of a stone. And on some other times, while the enemy was waging war to the saints in a manifested manner, the angels showed on themselves to the sight of the saints' eyes and they told to the saints that they were sent to help them and they instilled to the saints daring, courage, and manhood. On some other times the angels committed healing through the saints. On some other times, the angels healed the saints themselves who fell in some sufferings. And sometimes the saints' bodies exhausted by non-eating, the angels strengthened them and fortified them by hand's touch, or by telling them above-nature words. And on some other times the angels brought breads to the saints, sometimes even warm, and other things to eat. To some of the saints the angels announced their moving from here, and on occasion they told the saints even the way they will die.

And why to present many cases showing the love of the holy angels for us and their whole care for the saints? The angels take care of us as some big brothers for their siblings (Ps. 144: 19<sup>46</sup>). These things have been said for everybody to find out that “near if the Lord to all of them who call Him into truth”. And how much God takes care of them who have surrendered on themselves to Him, and who follow Him with the whole their heart!

What do you thing that God takes care of you for, because you are worried about the temporary things and about the need of your body? And if you to not believe that God takes care of you, and that’s why you worry about the things you need, you are more deplorable than all people (Ps. 54: 25<sup>47</sup>). And, so, what are you still living for, or what are you going to live for? “Cast you worry upon the Lord and He will feed you” (Prov. 3: 25); and do not get scarred by the fear coming upon you.

He who has bestowed on himself to God, he will live into the resting of his mind. Without non-earning, the soul will not be able to get free from the disturbance of the thoughts; and without the peace of the senses, the souls won’t feel the peace of the mind.

If one doesn’t reach into temptations, he won’t achieve the wisdom of the ghost. And without tiresomely reading, he won’t take the weakening of his thoughts. And without the peace of the thoughts, he won’t move himself within hidden mysteries. And without the strength of his faith the soul won’t be able to have courage and daring in temptations. And without the feeling of the proven cover from God, the heart won’t be able to hope in God. And if the soul doesn’t taste the sufferings of Christ into knowledge, that soul won’t have fellowship with Him<sup>48</sup>.

Reckon as man of God him who, out of his mercy on himself, he has made on himself a dead to his necessary needs.

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<sup>46</sup> In KJB we have: Ps. 145: 19: “He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.”; in ROB we have: Ps. 144: 19: “The will of them who fear Him He will do and their prayer He will hear and He will save them.” (E. l. t.’s n.)

<sup>47</sup> In KJB we have: Ps. 55: 22: “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.”; in ROB we have: Ps. 54: 25: “Cast towards the Lord your worry and He will feed you; and He won’t ever give wabbling to the righteous.” (E. l. t.’s n.)

<sup>48</sup> Here is the purpose of the fasting and of the restraints before the Holy Impartation.

This is for, he who gives alms to the poor he will have God as taking care of him. And he who has made on himself poor for God, he will have found endless treasures.

God needs nobody, but He rejoices when seeing somebody resting His image and honoring that for Him<sup>49</sup>. When somebody asks from you something that you have, do not say within your heart that you will keep that for your own soul, for you to enjoy that, and that God will fulfill that one's need somewhere else. These words belong to the unjust who do not know God. The righteous and honest man won't give his honor to somebody else. Neither let the time of the grace pass unworked<sup>50</sup>. The poor and needy man is given alms by God (this is for the Lord doesn't forsake anybody), but you have turned away from you the honor that has come to you from God, and you have removed the gift from God by removing the poor from you<sup>51</sup>. Therefore, when you give, rejoice and say: "Glory to You, my God, that you have found me worthy of finding somebody to rest". And if you do not have anything to give, you will rejoice even more, thanking God and saying: "Than You, my God, for You have given me this grace and this honor to make myself poor for Your name, and You have found me worthy of tasting the trouble sprinkled on the way of Your commandments, through sickness and poverty, as Your saints who walked on this way they tasted too".

And when you get sick, you will say: "Blessed is him who has been found worthy to be teste by God in the things which we inherit the life through". This is for God bring the illnesses for the health of our soul. This is for somebody among the saints said (and I wrote that down), that that monk who doesn't serve God in a way pleasant to God, and that monk who doesn't zealously live in asceticism for the salvation of his soul, but he behave idly in the asceticism for virtues, he will be left, without any doubt, by God, to fall in trials, so that he won't remain unworking, and due to the much-unworking to lean towards other even worse things. This is why God throws trials over them who are careless and lazy, so that they will cogitate at these ones and not at the vain things. But God always does this

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<sup>49</sup> God wants to do good to other through us, in order us to show our honoring to His image and us to improve on ourselves through love.

<sup>50</sup> There is an honor similar to that one of God, to help another, and it is a time of the grace, or of fructifying the grace, that time when you have the occasion to do good to somebody else.

<sup>51</sup> The grace is an interpersonal good; or, it is a good activate within the loving relations among us.

to the people who love Him, in order to rebuke them, and to make the wiser, and to teach them Him will. And when they pray to God, He won't listen to them immediately, but when they weaken and when they truly learn that that has happened to them because of their idleness and carelessness. This is for it is written: "When you stretch your hands towards Me, I will turn My eyes away from you, and if you will multiply your prayer, I won't hear you". (Isa. 1: 11). Although these things were written about others, doubtlessly they were written also about those who have forsaken the way of God.

But if we say that God is much merciful, why while ceaselessly knocking on the door and praying in trials we are not heard, but God overlooks our request? We are taught about this by the Prophet who says: "Not the hand of the Lord is too small for giving us alms, neither His ear is hard to hearing us, but our sins have separated us from Him and our lawlessness has turned His face away from us, in order Him not to hear us" (Isa. 58: 1). Remember God all the time and He will remember you when you fall into evil things.

Your nature has become receiver of evil things, and many of them have become the temptations of this world; and the evil things are not far from you, but they spring out from within you and from under your feet. And so close the eyelashes are to one another, as closer are the temptations too to the people. And these have been appointed by God into wisdom and for your benefit, in order you to knock patiently on His door and, by the fear of the troubles, to be sown His remembrance into your thought, and in order you to come closer to Him through prayers and your heart to be sanctified by ceaselessly remembering Him. And if you pray, He will hear you. And you will find out that God is The One Who delivers you and you will feel Him Who has made you and Who takes care of you and who has created for you the twofold world: one as temporary teacher and adviser; another as parental house and eternal inheritance of yours.

God hasn't made you insensitive to the things that sadden you up, lest, by lusting to be God, you to inherit what has inherited him who was Morningstar before, and then by pride he has become satan. Also, God hasn't created you as impossible to be persuaded, and immovable, in order you not to become like the nature of the inanimate realities, and your good things to be gainless and unrewarded, as their natural features

are to the speechless beasts. This is for everybody can easily see how much benefit and how much satisfaction and how much humbleness the man gains out of the coming of such troubles.

So, it is obvious that it depends on you to live in asceticism for the good things and to avoid the evil things; and that is beneficial the sadness, and the dishonor coming over you. This is for, by being dishonored, we will get ashamed and we will fear. And by being honored, while bringing thanks to God, we aspire to virtue. God has multiplied to you these pedagogues, lest, you by lacking them, namely you being insensitive to the things which make one sad and by being you above any fear, you will forget about your God and you will deviate from Him and you will fall into worshipping the many gods, as many others who, though suffer as you do and they are whipped by these saddening things, not only that they feel in an instance, for the sake of a temporary and poor power and wellness, into the worshipping of many gods, but they also dared insanely to reckon on themselves as gods.

Because of that, though, God allowed you to be in troubles. And sometimes he allowed that also in order you not to deviate and so to upset Him, and thus, in addition to the punishment coming upon you, Him to lose you from His face. Not to tell, also about the dishonor brought to God, and about all the other blasphemies born out of living in abundance and out of the lack of fear, even if somebody wouldn't dare to list up all the said things.

That's why, God has multiplied through suffering and upsets His remembrance within your heart and by fearing the opposite things you have been awakened up by God and so He brought you to the gate of His mercy. And by being you delivered from those and from their causes, God has sown within you the love for Him. And by sowing within you the love, God has brought you closer through the honor as son and God has shown you how rich His grace is.

This is because where could have you known this great taking of care and His protection, if the opposite things hadn't happened to you? This is for, in most of the cases, especially out of these will be multiplied the love for God within your heart, namely out of knowing His gifts and by remembering the greatness of His taking of care for you. All these good things are born to you out of the things saddening you, in order you to learn how to thank.

Therefore, you remember God, so that God will always remember you. And by remembering you and by delivering you, you will get from God the whole happiness. Do not forget about God, by scattering on yourself into the vain things, so that God won't forgive about you at the time of your wars. While you are having a good time, you be obedient to God, so that you to have into your troubles daring towards Him through your ceaseless prayer towards Him, done with the whole your heart.

You clean yourself up before God, by keeping His remembrance within your heart<sup>52</sup>, lest, by spending a long time without remembering God, you will be without daring when entering where He is. This is for the daring towards God comes out of the ceaseless dialogue with God and out of the much prayer<sup>53</sup>. Accustoming one to the people and living with the people are done through the body. Getting accustomed to God it is done by remembering God with our soul and by taking heed at the requests we address Him and by the total burning of the self. And out of the long perseverance in remembering Him, it will be committed the crossing into kidnappings and into wonderful things<sup>54</sup>. "The heart of them who are searching for God will be gladdened; look for the Lord you who are condemned, and you will be strengthened in your hope"; search for His face through repentance, be sanctified by the holiness of His face<sup>55</sup>, and clean up your sins. Run towards the Lord you who are guilty of sins, towards Him Who can forgive our sins and Who can overlook our mistakes (Ps. 104: 3<sup>56</sup>). This is for God uttered a oath through the prophet: "I am alive, says the Lord. I do not want the death of the sinner, but I want him to

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<sup>52</sup> The cleaning is done by ceaselessly remembering God, and that won't give place to thoughts of pleasure, to egotistic thoughts, which to enter the thinking.

<sup>53</sup> The often remembrance of God, by being like some kind of dialogue with God, it will give you a familiarity with Him, and therefore when you will be in front of Him, at judgment, you will have daring towards God. That's why the saints "have daring towards God", and, properly-said, the judgment they will to it won't be a judgment.

<sup>54</sup> By ceaselessly remembering God we will forgive about all the narrow realities and about ourselves and we will widen on ourselves in order to comprise God's infinity, and everything, into our love.

<sup>55</sup> God by being clean and all-loving, when we think at Him we do not receive into our thought except what is clean and loving, and we feel on ourselves as in some kind of looking at "His spiritual face".

<sup>56</sup> In KJB we have: Ps. 105: 3: "Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord."; in ROB we have: Ps. 104: 3: "Praise on yourself with His holy name; be gladdened the heart of those who search for the Lord." (E. l. t.'s n.)



turn back and to be alive” (Jez. 33: 11). And again: “I have been stretching My arms the whole day towards the disobedient and speaking-against people” (Isa. 65: 2). And again: “Why do you die with death, you the house of Israel?” (Hezekiah 33: 11). “Turn yourselves towards Me and I will turn Myself towards you” (Mal. 3: 7). And again: “On any day which the sinner turns away from his way and he looks towards the Lord and he will judge righteously, I will no longer remember his lawlessness. Living he will be alive, says the Lord. And the righteous, if he forsakes his righteousness and by sinning, he will do inequity, I will no longer remember his righteousness, but I will place a stumbling stone in his way, and he will die into the darkness of his deeds, if he perseveres in them” (Jez. 33: 14-15). Why? This is for the sinner won’t stumble on his sin on the day he will turn on himself towards the Lord, and the righteousness of the righteous won’t save him on the day he will commit sin, if he perseveres in that sin.

God told Jeremiah: “Take some paper and write down all the things I have told you since the day of Josiah, the king of Judah, until today, all the evil things I have told you that I will bring upon this people, so that by hearing and by fearing, they to forsake the evil way and, by turning back, to repent, and I will forgive their sins” (Jer. 36: 2-3). And the Wisdom says: “He who hides his sin, he won’t benefit of that. And he who confesses his sins and who crossed over them, he will achieve mercy from God” (Prov. 28: 13). And Isaah says: “Search for the Lord and, by finding Him, call Him. And by getting closer, let the sinner leave his way and the unjust man his thoughts. And turn towards Me and I will have mercy on you. This is for My thoughts aren’t as your thoughts, neither My ways according to your ways” (Isa. 55: 7-9). “If you will obey Me, you will eat the good things of the earth” (Isa. 55: 19). “Come to Me and obey Me and you will be alive into your souls” (Isa. 55: 3). When you keep the ways of the Lord and you do His wills, you hope into the Lord and call Him and while you are still shouting out, He will tell you: “Behold, I am present”.

When the temptation comes upon the unjust one, he won’t trust to call the Lord, neither to wait salvation from the Lord, because the days of the resting have been removed from him by the will of God. You ask for help before the war starts, and you search for Healer before you get sick. Pray before the troubles have come upon you, and on the day of your saddening

you will find Him and He will hear you. Call Him and pray Him before you start rolling down; and before you pray prepare your promises, namely their food. The ship of Noah was prepared in advance and the woods for it were planted 100 years before building that ship. And in the time of the wrath, the unjust ones were destroyed. But to the righteous one He was a cover.

The unjust mouth is shut up with the prayer. This is because a burdened conscience makes the man undaring. The heart sheds tears of joy in time of prayer.

They whom the world has died to, they will endure the trials joyfully. But they whom the world is still alive, they won't be able to endure the injustice, or they will get angry because of being pushed by their vain-glory and they will get disturbed without judgment, or they will be melted down by sadness. How difficult is to achieve the virtue of the patience and how much glory it will bring from God! He who wants to achieve this virtue, namely to receive with long-suffering the injustice, he must get far from his kins and to estrange on himself. This is for he cannot achieve this virtue while still living in his country. This is for if is characteristic only to those who are great and powerful, and them who this world has died to, and them who have lost any hope in the comforting from here, to endure the pain of this virtue while remaining among their people.

As close is the grace to the humble-cogitation, as close are the painful happenings to the pride. The eyes of the lord are towards them who are humble in thought, in order Him to gladden them; and the face of the Lord is before the proud ones, to humble them down. The humbleness always received mercy from God. And to the callous heart and to the fewness of the faith fearsome happenings come into their way. You diminish on yourself, in all aspects, in comparison to all people, and you will be elevated higher than the ruler of this century. Be the first one to bow down and you will be honored more than those who bring golden gifts.

Humble on yourself and you will see the glory of God within you. This is for where the humbleness sprouts out, there will spring up the glory of God. If you want to be your countenance despised by all people, God will make you to be glorified. But when God shows you His glory, you make on yourself easy to be despised into your glory, and do not make yourself great into your smallness. Strive to be despised and you will be filled up with the honor from God. Do not search for

being your honored while you are full of wounds inside. You despise the honor in order you to be honored, and do not love the honor because you will be despised. And he who runs after honor the honor will run away from before him. And he who runs away from honor he will be followed by honor and that will be herald to everyone about his humbleness. If you despise on yourself, in order you not to be honored, God will make you known. And if you defame on yourself for the truth, God will command to all His creatures to praise you. And these ones will open before you the door of Him Who created you and they will praise you. This is for you truly are His image and likeness<sup>57</sup>.

Wonderful, but rare, it is the man shining through virtues, and showing on himself to the people as humble, luminous in life, wide in conscience, but humble in his thought. Blessed is him who humbles on himself in all aspects, for he will be extolled. This is for he who humbles on himself and who diminishes on himself in everything for God, he will be glorified by God. And he who get hungry and thirsty for God, he will be made drunk by God with His goods. And he who disrobes on himself for God, he will be dressed up by God with the vestment of the incorruptibility and of the glory. You defame on yourself for God, and without you know it your glory will be multiplied for your entire life. Reckon on yourself as sinner, so that you will correct on yourself during the whole your life. Make yourself a fool (ἰδιώτης<sup>58</sup>) into wisdom, in order you not to show on yourself as wise, while being stupid. And while the simple and untaught is elevated by his humbleness, you reckon how much honor will bring that to the great and honored ones.

Run away from the vain-glory and you will be glorified, shun the pride and you will be extolled. This is because neither the vain-glory is given to the sons of the people, nor the haughtiness to the women. If you have rejected all the things of the life, nobody will ever rebuke you for a thing. If you have got disgusted of the vain-glory, you run away from them who are hunting for it. Run away from them who love the earning, as also from earning itself. Get far from the people who love partying, as from parties too. You run away from the

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<sup>57</sup> We have here a strong of paradoxes, as we have found also at Saint John Climacus. We remark, among others: "Make on yourself worthy of being despised when you are great by the glory that you have from God and do not make on yourself great when you are small". The true greatness is shown in the first case, and not in the second case.

<sup>58</sup> It might be this what inspired Dostoyevsky to write his novel *The Idiot*.

debauched, as also form debauchery too. If the simple memory of the said things disturbs your cogitation, how much more will the cogitation be troubles by seeing and by living with those? You get closer to the righteous ones and through them you will get closer to God. Spend your time with the humble and you will learn their behaviors. This is for, if the simple seeing of them is useful, how much more will be the teaching of their mouth?

Love the poor to that through them you to achieve the mercy<sup>59</sup>. Do not go close to the strife lovers, so that you won't be forced to get out your peace. Endure without disgust the bad smell of the sick, and especially of the poor, because you too are dressed up in body. Do not rebuke them who are sad in their heart, so that you not to be hit with the same staff which they have been hit with and so you to search for them who could comfort you and not to find them. Do not mock the male, or you will go in hell. Love the sinners but hate their deeds and do not despise them for their mistakes, in order not to be yourself tempted by those mistakes. Do not rebuke them who need your prayer and do not deprive them of the gentle words of the comforting, so that they not to be lost and their soul to be asked for from you. But you follow the example of the physicians, who heal the hotter illnesses with colder medicines and the colder illnesses with the opposite things.

You force on yourself, when you meet your fellow human, to honor him above his measure. Kiss his hands and feet and often hold them with much honor and place them on your eyes and praise him even for the things which he doesn't have. And when he leaves, you tell him all the good and everything that honors him. This is for by those and by similar things you attract him to good and you force him to be ashamed by the names which you call him with. And so, you will sow within him the seeds of the virtue. And through this habit that you have impropriated to yourself, the image of the kindness will be imprinted within you and you will achieve much humbleness and you will fulfill tirelessly the great things. And even more than that, even if that one has some shortcomings, by being honored by you, he will easily receive from you his healing, by being ashamed of the honor that you have shown him. Let this be the way of your behavior: nicely speaking and honoring

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<sup>59</sup> By your mercy you will gain their love and in their love is working the love from God.

everybody. Do not get angry on somebody, to not rebuke either for faith or for evil deeds. And guard on yourself not to defame or to condemn somebody for something. This is for we have an unbiased judge in heavens. And if you want to turn somebody to truth, get yourself saddened for him with tears and tell him with love a word or two, and to not get angry on him. This is for, if you do so, he will see in you the sign of the enmity. This is for the love doesn't know how to get wrath, or how to get angry, or how to blame on somebody passionately. The sign of the love and of the knowledge is the humbleness, that is born out of a good conscience into Christ Jesus our Lord Whom it is due the mastery, together with the Father and with the Holy Ghost, now and forever and ever. Amen.

## **Word VI**

### **About the Benefit Born out of the Running Away from the World**

Truly harsh and difficult and hard is the asceticism through deeds. And regardless how undefeated and strong one would reach to be, when the causes of the baits and or the wars and of the fights approach him the fer will attach to him and it will bring him ton falling; all the more it will be so when he meets the shows war of the devil. This is for to the extent the man gets far from the things feared by his heart, he will give power to his enemy against him. And when the man falls asleep even for a little while, the enemy will easily defeat him. This is because, when the soul encounters the damaging happening of the world, these happenings become spears to him, and he is somehow naturally defeated while answering those. Actually, our fathers from yore, who walked these paths, they knew that the mind isn't strong all the time, neither can the mind remain steadfast in the same rule and to guard on itself, and sometimes it happens that the mind cannot see the things damaging it. That's why they invented into their wisdom and they put on as a weapon the non-earning, as free, as it was written, from many wars (for the man to be able thus to get rid through his poverty of many sins). That's why they went to wilderness, where there are no things in, because the things are

the causes of the passion, so that neither when the time of a weakening came, they wouldn't find reasons for falling, namely the anger, the lust, the keeping of evil in mind, and the glory, but all of these were weaker due to the wilderness. They fortified and built on themselves into wilderness as in an unconquerable tower. And so, each of them was able to consummate their fight in quietude. This was because there the senses were unable to unite themselves with the one who wages us war, by encountering the damaging things. This is for it is better to us to die in battle than to live in sin.

## **Word VII**

### **About the Rule of the Beginners and about the Things Due to Them**

This is their pious and pleasant to God rule: not to let their eyes look around, but to always look forward; not to speak vain things, but only what is needed; to be content with poor clothes, according to the need of the body; to use the food for upholding their body and not towards covetousness. To impart on themselves with all the things but only a little, and not to avoid some and to choose some, neither to fill up their belly with the things they chose.

Greater than all virtues it is the right-reckoning. Do not drink wine except with your friends, or when you are sick and helpless; do not interrupt the speech of him who speaks, and not foolishly contradict him, but be serious as a wise man. And wherever you are, you will reckon on you as the smallest and servant of your brothers. Do not show any naked limb to anyone, neither to get close to somebody's body except if unavoidably needed. Shun the daring as from death. Set a decent rule to your sleep, so that the power guarding you not to forsake you; and wherever you sleep, if possible, let nobody see you. Do not spit before somebody. And if when sitting down, you feel the urge to cough, turn backwards and cough thus. Eat and drink temperately, as it is due to the children of God.

Do not stretch your hand to take something, shamelessly, from in front of the people whom you sit at the table with. And if

there is a stranger sitting at the same table urge him once and twice to eat, and then you sit in good order at that table and not disorderly. Sit in good order and gathered together, and not to have any limb naked.

When you yawn, cover your mouth, in order not to be that seen. And by stopping you breathing, that will pass away.

When you enter the monastic cell of your protos, or of a friend, or of a disciple, guard your eyes not to see anything of the things from within it. And if your thought urges you, take heed not to obey it and do the opposite, because he who behaves indecently into these, he is stranger to the monastic image and to Christ Who bestowed this image to us. Do not look at the places where are hidden the vessels in the monastic cell of your friend. Open and close serenely the door of your friend. Do not enter unexpectedly to somebody. But knock on the door and enter decently, when you are invited inside.

Do not hurry up in your walking, except you are forced to by an unavoidable need. Be obedient to anyone in any good thing, but do not follow them who love the earning, who love the money, and to the worldly ones, not to be fulfilled something of the devil.

Talk gently to anybody and look at anybody decently, and do not attach your eyes to the face of somebody.

When walking on the road, do not walk in front of the superiors. And if your company legged behind, and you are a little ahead, you will wait for him. He who doesn't do like that he is mindless and close to the pig which has no law. And if your company starts talking to some people whom he comes across with, you won't hurry him up. Let the healthy one to tell the sick one, before time: "Let's do out need"<sup>60</sup>.

Do not rebuke somebody for any mistake, but you reckon on yourself as accountable in everything and as the cause of the mistake. Do not shun from doing, with humble cogitation, not even the most despised thing, but do not ask somebody else to do it. If you are forced to laugh, do not avoid that, but do not let your teeth to be seen. And if you are forced to talk to women, you will turn away your face from seeing them and so you will be able to talk to them. But shun from nuns as from fire; and

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<sup>60</sup> The healthy one to ask the sick one to allow him to do his needs, because the sick one maybe shies. We have in this *Word* a wonderful *Code of the Elegant Manners*, not a superficial one, but deeply rooted into the fullest sincerity.

you will avoid meeting and talking to them and seeing them as it would a trap of the devil, in order you to avoid your heart getting cold from the love for God and you to avoid dirtying your heart with the mud of the passions. Even if they were your sisters, you would avoid them as strangers.

Guard yourself against the mixing with your kins to that to avoid your heart to get cold from the love for God.

Avoid the daring and the meetings with those who can tempt you, as it would be the friendship with the devil. Let yourself have as together-speaker and as together-interpreter of the mysterious things only one: he who fears God and how is always taking heed at himself, and who is poor in his shelter but he is rich in the mysteries of God.

Hide from everybody your mysteries, your deeds, and your ascetic toils. Do not stay in front of somebody without wearing a hat, except it is needed. Go out to do your need decently, and shying yourself of the angel who guards you. And live with fear of God and force on yourself until your death, even if that would be unpleasant to your heart.

You better take deadly venom than eating with women, even if they would be your mother and your sister. It would be tetter to you if you lived together with a dragon, than to sleep with a young man under the same blanket, even if that would be your natural brother.

If somebody superior to you says you, when you are on the road: "let's sing", you will obey him. And if he doesn't tall you that, you will keep your silent with your mouth, but extoll God with your heart.

Do not oppose somebody, neither wage war to him, neither tell lies, nor to swear on the name of your Lord God. Allow yourself to be despised but do not despise. Allow yourself to be done injustice to, but you do not injustice. It is better the bodily things to rotten together with the body than to harm something from among the souly things. Do not sue anyone, but endure if you are condemned even if you are innocent.

Do not love without your soul anything from among the worldly things, but obey them who rule and master and avoid getting mixed with them. This is because this is a trap which the careless fall into, towards their perdition.

Oh, you the greedy one, who search for comforting your belly, you better cast embers into it than the cookies of them who rule and master. Pour your mercy on everybody and be shy



to everybody. Guard yourself against the much-speaking, because it quenches form within heart the understanding movements which sprout out from God.

Avoid the discussions about dogmas as they would be a furious lion. Do not enter such discussions neither with believers of the Church nor with the strangers.

And to not cross through the places where furious and quarrelling people are, in order to avoid your heart to be filled up with anger and so the dark to take over your soul.

Do not inhabit together with the proud one, so that the work of the Holy Ghost not to leave your soul and you to become a dwelling place of all passions.

If you, man, guard these rules, and if you occupy on yourself always with the cogitation at God, your soul will see into yourself the light of Christ and your soul will never get darkened. For to Christ are due the glory and the mastery forever. Amen.

## **Word VIII**

### **About the Thin Way of the Discernment**

Take heed at you, always, and see the purpose they deeds have, the troubles coming upon you, the desert place of your living, the thinness of your mind joined with the detailed knowledge, the great length of your peace, together with the many medicines, namely those trial brought by the true Doctor for the health of your internal man. Some of those come, for a while, for the devils, for a while from the illnesses a body's sufferings, for a while as fears of the thoughts of the soul, as fearsome memories of the thing from the future life; and for another while as stings and burdening of the hot grace and of the sweet tears and of the joy of the ghost, and together with others – not to say more.

Can you see out of all of these that your wound has started healing and steadfastly closing up? Namely, have your passions started weakening? If it is so, they are a sign from God. So, you enter withing yourself and take heed at which passions you see as starting to get weakened, and which passions have perished and they have been totally removed and

which passion have started to be silent due to the fact that your soul has been healed and not because the ones who terrify your soul have got far from your, and which passions have started to allow on themselves controlled by cogitation because of the absence of their causes. And take heed again at the following fact: can you limpidly see that in the rottenness of your wound has starter growing the living body<sup>61</sup> that is the peace of the soul? And which passions keep us under force and under the pressure and at what time? And are those passions bodily and souly or are they joined and mixed? And if, though weakened, they move into memory in a covered manner, or do they rebel powerfully against the soul? And do they move around as some masters or are they sneaking around? And how the imperial mind, that one master over senses, it takes heed at the? And when the occur, will the mind fight them and it will make them weakening with its power, or will the mind accept them without keeping them in sight anymore? And which of the old passion have been removed and which have been recently born? And which of the passions move in form of images, and which move in feeling without taking the shape of images? Which move in memory in a dispassionate manner and without (tempting) thoughts and without inciting? Out of these, again, how can one know the soul's measure as it is.

Where the first ones are, the souls haven't reached yet to settle on themselves. This is for they still ask the soul for a fight, despite the soul showing a strength against them. And where are the others, as the Scripture said in a prophetic manner: "David sat in his house and God rested him from all

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<sup>61</sup> The note in the Grek text: "The body of our proto-parent before falling, as non-obeying the reproachable passions and non-corrupted by the corruptible pleasures, neither killed by the destructive lusts, it was dispassionate and alive, having a life unsubmitted to the shame and to the pain. But after the falling, by submitting on itself to the ugliest passions, and by being corrupted by the evil lusts and pleasures, it has become passionate and dead to the working of the virtue, according to the word: "In the very day you eat from it, you will die with death" (Gen. 2: 17). This is because once our proto-parent tasted out of that tree, it died the impulse towards good from our proto-parent's body. But through faith and by the grace of the Son of God embodied for us, that dead and passionate body can be disrobed again, and the dispassionate and living body can be put on. This is for, by being the passions killed, the living body will immediately appear, as the pious says. This is for, by calling above the passions as "wound", and the health of the body as "the weakening of the passions", he adds that "into the rottenness of the would", namely into the weakness and rottenness of the passions it will "appear the living body".

the people from around him” (2 Kings<sup>62</sup> 7: 1). And in these there is not about only one from among passions, but there is firstly about the natural passions, namely about lust and wrath; and then, the said things must be understood also about the love for glory, and for pleasure, which imagine and hallucinate the faces and stir up to lust and desire. Also, the passions of the love for money, which the soul is imparted hiddenly with, even when doesn’t allow to be himself convinced to do the deed. This is because even then are imprinted within mind the images of the deeds of the love for money, related to the earning of money, and the soul is forced to think at them and at the way the soul could commit those deeds together with other deeds.

But not all the passions wage war to us through baits (attacks). This is because there are passions which bring only troubles to the soul: idleness, boredom, and sadness. They do not come as bait, neither the lure the soul by making him to think at resting, but they bring a burden to the soul. And the soul’s strength is tested in the victory upon those which wage war to the soul by bait. The think knowledge of these ones and the signs the man must have about those in order him to feel at any step he takes, where he has reached and what field the soul started stepping on, in Canaan or beyond Jordan<sup>63</sup>.

Take heed at this too: has the soul enough knowledge by his light, in order to discern between these ones, or the soul discerns them though darkness, or is the soul totally lacking this? Do you feel that your cogitation has started to become get cleaned? Doesn’t take place there a scattering during prayer? And which is the passion that disturbs the cogitation when the time for prayer comes? Do you feel without yourself that the power of the quietude overshadows the soul with the gentleness, with the serenity, and with the peace which the soul uses to give birth to in cogitation? It is your mind kidnapped unwillingly by the meanings of the incorporeal realities, which the senses cannot interpret? Is suddenly ignited within you a joy that brings your tongue to silence? Is there springing in the matchless joy of your heart a certain pleasure that gets your mind out of everything?

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<sup>62</sup> In KJB this book is usually called as 2 Samuel. (E. I. t.’s n.)

<sup>63</sup> “The land of Canaan shows the body’s cleanness and the peaceful state of the soul, and the consummation gained in the human life. And the things from beyond Jordan show the uncleanness caused by passions and the disturbance caused by sin and by the passionate living”.

This is for, unnoticeably, from time to time, there comes over the whole body a joy and a gladness, which the flesh tongue cannot express and, in comparison to which, all the earthly realities are reckoned as ashes and trash. The first one among those springs out of the heart during the time of the prayer, another warms up the mind during the reading, and again, another through the ceaseless cogitation (at God). This last one is most of the time outside the others, and it often is caused by a passing thing; and often, at night, in the same time it occurs between sleep and vigil, when it seems that you sleep and do not sleep, or you take vigil but you don't. When this delectation comes, it makes palpitating the whole body, and he who receives it he will reckon in those moments that the Kingdom of Heavens is nothing else but this.

Search for an see again whether your soul has achieved the power that thins up the memories of the senses, with the help of that hope that masters upon your heart and which strengthens the senses from within by the unspoken conviction cause by a mysterious entrustment. And if the heart is awake, see whether your heart hasn't been again enslaved again, because of its carelessness, by the earthly things, despite it is ceaselessly peaking about its ceaseless work, which your heart was together with your Savior.

You achieve the knowledge for discerning between its existence and the stories about it. What helps the soul to quickly taste these, it is the ceaseless peace in his ceaseless and perseverant work. This is because they will be lost after finding them, if you do not take care of what you have received; and you won't find them again for a long time. When one is in these he will dare to say, encouraged by the witness of his conscience, what the blessed Paul said: "I am entrusted that neither the death, nor the life, neither the present ones, nor the future ones, neither all others can separate me from Christ" (Rom. 8: 38). Namely neither the body's troubles, and together with those also the soul's troubles, neither the hunger, nor the persecution, neither the nakedness, nor the loneliness, neither the prison, nor the danger, neither the sword, nor the angels of satan, neither his powers in the form of the evil plots, nor the glory that tempts by its bait, which it lures us with, neither the slandering and the rebukes joined with the useless and vain hits.

If these ones, oh, by brother, they haven't started to diminish, or to cease to be seen within your soul, your ascetic toils and your troubles and the whole your peace are a useless toil. And even if wonderful deeds will be committed through your hand and they will resurrect dead people, you will reckon those the same. So, you immediately move your soul and persuade through your tears Him who saves, so that Him will pull the curtain from the door of your heart and He will pluck the darkness of the storm of the passions off the sky from within you<sup>64</sup>, in order Him to make you worthy to see the ray of the day and you not to die sitting into the eternal darkness.

The continuous vigil, joined with the reading and with the often kneelings, one after another, they won't be late in bringing these goods to them who strive for it. And he who has found these, he has found them in those.

But they who want to find these they must persevere in quietude, together with their work; and in addition to these, they mustn't tie their cogitation to anything, and not even to a man, but only to their own soul, and let them persevere in the inward work. But neither in these deeds we will find only within some of them a feeling lived by us. And only by that we achieve an entrustment about the others as well.

But he who sits in quietude and who has received the experience of the kindness of God, he won't need much proving. That's why he neither will be sick within his soul with some sort of disbelief, as it happened to them who doubt the truth. The witness of his mind will suffice him to entrust him more than the countless words which are outside experience. Of God be the glory and the extolling forever! Amen.

## **Word IX**

### **Brief Presentation of the Kinds of the Monastic Rule and Living. And how the Virtues are Born Ones out of Others**

Out of the forced work it will be born the immeasurable warmth, which burns within heart out of the hot memories

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<sup>64</sup> Abo the clean mind one can see the "sky", or the godlike light. This "sky" is darkened by the storm of the passions.

which occur again within mind. And this work together with the guarding they thin up the mind within their warmth and they bestow the sight to the mind. And this sight gives birth to the hot thoughts which I poke about, in the deeps of the soul's sight that is called contemplation. And at its turn, this contemplation gives birth to warmth, and this warmth that has come through the gift of the contemplation<sup>65</sup>, it is born the flowing of the tears. In the beginning the gain is small, namely during a day the tears come to the man and then disappear for several times. But later on, there will come the ceaseless tears. And out of the ceaseless tears the soul will receive the peace of the thoughts<sup>66</sup>. And from the peace of the thoughts the soul will be elevated to the cleanness of the mind. And from the cleanness of the mind the man reaches to see the mysteries of God. This is for the cleanness is hidden in having peace from wars<sup>67</sup>. After these ones, the mind reaches to see unveilings and signs, as Prophet Jezekiel saw. These ones compose the three steps which the soul comes close to God through<sup>68</sup>.

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<sup>65</sup> Only at Isaac the Syrian we can see this intertwining between contemplation and the warmth and the tears. And only him reckons that as born out of grace. Doubtlessly, at him this contemplation refers to God, and not the rationalities of the things as in case of other spiritual writers.

<sup>66</sup> Again, only at Isaac the Syrian, the peace of the thoughts appears as caused by tears.

<sup>67</sup> Where there still are wars, the thoughts are not yet clean.

<sup>68</sup> "Among these ones the first one is, as it was said, the forced work, or the hunger, the reading, the taking of vigil for the whole night and the others connected to these ones. The second one is the contemplation. And the third one is the warmth out of which the ceaseless tears come out of. The signs seen by Prophet Jezekiel are three. The first sign was the wind coming from north; the second sign was the light from around him; the third sign was the amber in the middle of the fire (Chap. 1: 4). The wing symbolizes the work, for it comes with strong force: the wind coming from north, as also the forced work done by forcing the body, it forcibly raises us out of all body's passions. About this work tells us also the word of our Savior: "The Kingdom of Heavens is being taken by force and they who force on themselves they will kidnap it" (Mt. 11: 12). And the light is contemplation. This is for what else would somebody contemplate through this contemplation, if he didn't contemplate God? And God is light. (We have here, much before the Century XIV, the affirmation of the seeing of God as light by those who are cleaned up of passions *o. n.*). "I am the light of the world" (Jn. 8: 12). And the light will dawn to them who contemplate Him. This is for it was said: "Light dawned to the righteous" (Ps. 96: 12 (in KJB we have Ps. 97: 11 (E. l. t.'s n.))). "And the light is always before their eyes; light to the righteous ones forever" (Prov. 13: 9). And the amber that burns is the heavenly warmth of the grace that occurs in an above-nature manner within heart and it warms up in a very sweet manner the whole soul and it fills up the soul with the godlike longing and love. This was felt by Cleophas and by the people who he was travelling together with, who said to one another: "Hasn't been our heart burning within us, when he has been talking to us on the road and interpreting the Scriptures to us?" (Lk. 24: 32).

The beginning of all of these is the good urge towards God and the kids of the deed of the appeasement, unchanged. These ones are born out of the much cutting off (of the will) and from getting far from the things of the human live. There is not much need to mention each sort of things, because they are known to everybody. But because presenting them won't cause any loss to the reader, but it is rather beneficial, as I reckon, we won't be lazy in presenting them.

These ones are: the hunger, the reading, the woken-up vigil during the entire night, according to each one's power, and the multitude of the prostrations which must be done during day and night hours. One must do at least 30 prostrations in each series, and then to kiss the honored cross and then to withdraw within the monastic cell. But there are some people who add to this measure, according to their won power. Others pray for three hours, having their mind into watchfulness and throwing on themselves on their faces, without getting bored and without their thoughts getting scattered. These two things show and unveil the great richness of the kindness or of the grace, which is being shared to each one among people according to his worthiness.

But which is the kind of the other prayer and of the perseverance into it, unforcedly, we have reckoned as not being good to tell, neither to use the tongue's word or the letters to present its nature and rule, lest him who reads that, by not understanding anything of what he is reading, to reckon the written things as useless, or by being himself nescient about them him to disregard him who know about the nature of those things; and by that him to come to contempt, and from contempt him to come to mockery. In this way he will be like a barbarian in those things, according to the Apostle's word said about him who prophesizes (1 Cor. 14: 11).

So, he who wants to find out about these, let him walk on the road open before and let him start working according to the cogitation. And when he enters the work, he will learn from himself and he won't need anybody to teach him. "Sit, he says, into your monastic cell and itself this thing will teach you". And to our God is due the glory forever. Amen.

**Word X****Through what Is Guarded the Beauty of the Monastic Living  
and what Is the Way of Extolling God**

The monk must be in all his behaviors and in all his deeds a useful example to them who see him, in order that out of his many virtues, which must shine like some rays seen by the enemies of the truth, these ones to confess about the monk that he is for Christians a sure and steadfast hope, and the Christians to run to him from all quarters, as to a shelter. And by that the horn of the Church to be raised against the Churches's enemies and many to be moved towards desiring his virtue and to get out of the world, and him to be honored in everything for the beauty of his living. This is for the monastic living is the pride of the Church.

Therefore, the monk must have nice behaviors in all aspects, namely his look above the seen things, the full non-earning, the total contempt for our body, the high fasting, the perseverance into quietude, the good order of the senses, the guarding of the sight, the avoidance of any strife for a thing belonging to this life, the shortness of his speech, the cleanness in remembering the evil, the simplicity united with the right-reckoning<sup>69</sup>, the innocence of the heart united with the wisdom, with the nimbleness, and with the sharpness of the understanding<sup>70</sup>.

Let him then know that the present life is passing and quickly flowing and that the true and spiritual life is near to us; let him not be known by people and let him not despair. Let him not allow to be himself tied by the friendship or by the company of any man' let him have the place of his living a peaceful place; let him always avoid the people and let him ceaselessly persevere in prayers and in readings; let him not love the honors and let him not enjoy the banquets; let him not tie on himself to this life; let him manly endure the trials; let him deliver on himself of the worldly lusts, by inquiring them, and by remembering

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<sup>69</sup> The right-reckoning or the discernment is the balance matureness of judging. But it must be done with simplicity. Namely, the simplicity doesn't mean stupidity and the right-reckoning doesn't mean cunningness.

<sup>70</sup> The same paradoxical union between things seeming to be opposite, which shows the matureness and the non-unilaterality of the spiritual man.



their things; let him have his worries for and his thought at the true country; let him have his face serious and composed; and let him shed tears day and night. And more than all of these, let him guard his righteousness, let him get rid of his belly's covetousness, and let him clean himself up of his small or big sins. These are the virtues of the monk, to say shortly, which testify about his consummate death towards the world and about his closeness to God.

Therefore, we must ceaselessly take care of all of these, in order us to achieve them. And if somebody says: "What it was needed for, him to speak about them by and large, and briefly?", I will answer that that was needed for, when he who takes care of his life, he will search for one of the mentioned things and he will see that that one misses from his soul, he will be able to know out of that his lack of fulness in all virtue and he will remember this list. And when he has achieved all the mentioned things, he will be given the knowledge of the others too, which I haven't treated about. And he will be to the saints a reason for extoll God. And through that he will prepare a resting place to his soul, before living the present life. And may the glory be of our God, forever! Amen.

## **Word XI**

**It Is not Appropriate to the Servant of God, Who Has  
Deprived on Himself of the Worldly Things and Who Has  
Gone Out in Order to Search for God, to Cease this  
Searching because He Hasn't Reached to Comprise the  
Truth, and Him to Chill out the Warmth Born out of the  
Longing for the Godlike Realities and out of Inquiring their  
Mysteries.  
And What the Mind is Defiled Like by Remembering the  
Passions**

Three are the steps which the man advances through: the stage of the beginners, the middle stage, and the stage of the consummate. He who is on the first step, though his thought tends towards good, he still has the movement of his cogitation within passions. The second step, is in amid dispassion and addiction. In him are moving both the thoughts from the right

and the thoughts from the left. He doesn't cease, as it was said, to spring out both the light and the darkness. And he will often stop for a while from continuously reading the godlike Scriptures and from thinking at the godlike meanings, which ignite him with the countenances of truth when he imagines those, according to his power, in the same time with the external avoidance, out of which it will be born the most inward guarding and an enough work – then he will be dragged by passions. But if he nourishes his natural warmth in the mentioned things and he doesn't leave the searching for them and the desiring for them from the distance, because he hasn't seen them yet, and by nourishing his thoughts with the water of the reading of the godlike Scriptures and by upholding them not to lean towards the things from the left, and also in order they not to receive any devilish seed in the countenance of the truth, He rather will guard his soul with this longing and he will ask for God with pained prayer and with patience, and God Himself will fulfill his request and He will open His door, especially for his humbleness. This is for the mysteries will be opened to the humble ones<sup>71</sup>. And if he dies with this hope, even if he hasn't seen that country from close by any means, I reckon that he will inherit the that country together with the righteous one from old, with them who hoped to reach the consummation, but they didn't see it, according to the apostolic word<sup>72</sup>, for they were working for hope on all their days, but they didn't receive it.

But what are we going to say, if the man doesn't reach to enter the Promised Land, that is the way of the consummation, namely he hasn't reached to receiving the manifested truth, according to the measure of his natural power<sup>73</sup>? Will he be stopped by that and will him remain on the inferior step, whose whole impulse tends towards the left? Or, for he receives the whole truth, will he remain within the lower group on the inferior step, a group which don't know these things and they don't even want these things? Or must him accede on the middle step, which we mentioned? But, if he even haven't seen

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<sup>71</sup> The humble ones open on themselves to the others. Therefore, to God too. The proud ones see only on themselves, so that they are locked up in themselves and they are blind.

<sup>72</sup> He maybe thinks at the word: "And all of these, who were confessed through faith, they didn't receive the promise" (Hebr. 11: 39).

<sup>73</sup> "The measure of the natural power" means the powers given to his nature that, by using the grace, to reach the steps of the consummation.

that ever, except like in a mirror, he still hope further on, and by that hope he will be placed together with his fathers. And if he hasn't been found worthy of receiving the consummate gift here, through the continuous dialogue with the grace and by spending his time in grace with the whole his mind, during his life, he has been able to cut off his evil thoughts. This was because his heart left this world being full with God into hope.

Everyone who has humbleness in themselves they will enjoy the honor. This is for the incorporeal living of the mind into the longing for God, which the mind is guided within by the understanding of the godlike Scriptures, it will lock up the soul inside, when facing the evil thoughts, and it will keep the cogitation in the remembrance of the future goods, in order the mind not to get drowsy through its idleness and, instead of occupying on itself with the better things, the mind to occupy on itself with the remembrance of the worldly things. This is because, by that, the warmth of the wonderful movements of the mind will get chilled out, and he will fall into vain and irrational lusts. And may the glory be of our God!

## **Word XII**

### **How It is Due to Sit in Peace Him Who Has the Right-Reckoning**

Listen to me, my beloved one: if you want your lusts not to be vain, and your days not to become unworking and deprived of the earning hoped by them who live with the right-reckoning in quietude, let again be your entering in this one too with right-reckoning. You won't do this while thinking at something else, lets you will end like the many. But let yourself have in your cogitation steadfastly its target, so that all the deeds of your virtue to be directed towards it. And you will ask them who rather know this by experience than by knowledge. And you won't stop until you will have learnt its deeds in all the paths. And you will take heed at any step you take: take heed if you will advance on the due way by taking that step, or will you deviate on some different path than that you must walk on. Do not think that the living totally dedicated to appeasement it being consummated only through the shown deeds.

If you want to find out something and to reach that by experiencing it yourself, you will take heed at the signs and at the proofs occurring within your soul, at any step you take, and out of those you will know the truth of the fathers or the delusion of the enemy. Take heed at these few things, until you will be made wise on your way: when you see that in your peace of your mind your cogitation can move freely in the thoughts from the right side and it is not forcedly taken over by some other thought, you will know that your quietude is righteous. And again, take heed when you serve (when you liturgize), if you are in one or another way of your serving (of the liturgy) far from scattering and the verse will be suddenly cut off your tongue and there will be stretched over your soul the ties of the silence from outside his freedom<sup>74</sup>, and if these ones continue perseveringly, you will know that you go ahead into your quietude and it has started to take shape the gentleness within you. This is for the simple quietude, out of the deeds of the righteousness, it is priceless<sup>75</sup>. The simple living is reckoned, by the wisemen who have the right-reckoning, as an apart limb that is separated from the help of the others.

And again, if you see with your soul that through every thought moved by your soul and through the views (contemplations) coming into your quietude, your eyes are filled with tears and your tears flow down your cheeks effortlessly, you will not that there will have been started to be done an opening in the separation wall, towards the destruction of your enemies.

And if you see within you, from time to time, your cogitation sinking withing you, without the worry or the usual

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<sup>74</sup> "He surely calls "liturgy" the prayer. And the "diversity of the liturgy" he calls the divers ways which one can commit the work of the prayer in. This is for we either pray by singing, or by reading, or by standing up, or by kneeling and prostrating, or by raising our hands up. And again, sometimes we pray with a loud voice, on some other times we pray in our mind, and on some other times only by moving our lips. But what does it mean: "And suddenly the verse will be cut off your tongue and over your soul will be stretched the ties of the silence, stopping you soul from his freedom", except that the consummate prayer done by the tongue it ends suddenly and it enters inside the soul and it becomes entirely mental, and that will force the soul to no longer scatter his usual freedom into the external realities, but to forsake any other worry and cogitation, by following only et meanings of the prayer!"

<sup>75</sup> "This means that only the quietude, without any other virtue, we find it as priceless, of the judge rightly". A peaceful man can be also a man who calculates carefully his malefactor plans. The quietude has a content of peace, of gentleness, of love, when focused on God. It is not commendable an egotistic peace.

order from outside, and this lasts for an hour or more, and after that you see your limbs in a big tiredness and the peace ruling over your thoughts, and this remains within you for a long time, you will know that the cloud will have started to overshadow your tent.

And if while you live in quietude you find within your soul thought tearing your soul apart and taking your soul under their domination, and these thoughts always engulf your soul, and your soul's cogitation is always focused on the things he has done, or it wants to inquire the vain things, you will know that you vainly tire on yourself with the quietude. This is because your soul lives in scattering. And causes for that come either from outside, or because of your carelessness from inside related to your duties, better said your carelessness to take vigil and to read. So, you must immediately set your work in order.

And if by doing that you enter these days, but you don't immediately find peace from the disturbance caused by your passions, you won't wonder. This is because even the bosom of the earth remains hot for a long time after the sunrays crosses over it and the smell of the medicine and the smoke of incense poured into the sky it will persist for a long time before scattering and disappearing, all the more will the passions remain when stopped from their usual matter, as baking at the doors, like the dogs used to lick the blood in the butchery, until their power of habit won't be scattered away.

When the idleness starts entering your soul, hiddenly, and it turns from the darkened ones behind your soul, and the house start being filling up with darkness, there will emerge these signs: you feel within you, secretly, that your faith weakens and you are too worried about the seen things, that your trust diminishes and you hurt your neighbor and the whole your soul and your mouth are filled up with contempt, and you tend with your heart to thoughts and feelings and in all the things you come across, you are against any man, or even against the All-High; you fear the hurting of your body, and by that you are dominated by your lack of courage all the time, and from time to time your soul meets the fear, to that you are afraid and you feel spied on yourself even by your own shadow. This is because you have covered the faith with the faithlessness. And we are speaking not about that faith that is the foundation of the general confession, but we are speaking about that power that upholds the mind with the light of the

understanding and that wakes up within one's soul, through the witness of the conscience, much trust in God, so that the soul won't take care of himself but he will throw upon God his careless care in anything.

And when you go ahead, you will see these signs manifested in an unmediated manner within your soul. Then you will be strengthened in everything and you will be enriched in prayer, and the spring of the (spiritual) earning won't ever miss from your cogitation, in everything which you come across with. But you will still feel the weakness of the human nature and by each of those you guard on yourself against pride. On the other hand, your eyes will overlook the mistakes of your neighbor. And you will be filled up with the desire for getting out of your body, to the extent of your desire to reach the future things. And all the troubles happening to us, when they meet you in an appearance of hidden manner, you reckon them as justified. You search in details the things from near to you, in order you to get rid of your self-appreciation by doing that. You will give confession and thanks for everything. These are the signs of them who take vigil and who guard on themselves and who persevere in quietude and who desire to reach the true living<sup>76</sup>.

And they who are idle do not need these subtle signs of the traps of the falling, because they are far from the hidden virtues. When one of these starts emerging within your soul, you will be able to understand on the same instant what part you will have started leaning to. This is for you will be able to immediately know what sort that will be. May God bestow us the true knowledge! Amen.

### Word XIII

#### **To Them Who Appease on Themselves It Is Useful the Ceasing of the Damaging Worries, the Entrance and the Exit**

He who worries about many things he won't be able to be gentle and peaceful, because of the images of the things which he reckons as necessary to him and which he is troubled with, they will force him to move among them and to occupy on

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<sup>76</sup> This image is used too by *The Ladder* of Saint John Climacus.

himself unwillingly with them and so they will scatter his peace and his quietude. Therefore, the monks must place on himself before God's face and him to focus in an unchanged manner his eye on Him, if the monk wants to guard his mind and to clean up and to transform the small movement emerging within him and if he wants to learn how to peacefully discern among the things which come in or go out. And the many occupations of the monks are a sign of drowsiness regarding their assertiveness in working the commandments of Christ. They show the monks' mistakes regarding the godlike things.

Do not search for light within your soul without carelessness, neither search for peace and quietude in the drowsiness of your feelings. And if you occupy on yourself with diverse things, do not multiply your occupation lets your mind will be scattered when you will pray. This is because one cannot come close to God without the ceaseless prayer. And if you give to your mind another worry after the tiredness of the prayer you will cause to your mind its scattering into cogitation.

The tears and the slapping on the head during prayer, and the rolling on the floor with warmth, they will bring their warmth within the heart and the heart will fly in the worthy to be praised kidnapping towards God and it will shout out: "My soul got thirsted of You, You the strong and living God. When will I come and show myself to your face, Lord?" (Ps. 41: 3<sup>77</sup>). Only him who has drunk this wine and after that he missed it, only him know what wickedness he has fallen into and what has been taken away from him, because of his drowsiness<sup>78</sup>.

Of, how damaging is the looking at and the talking to them who live in quietude! Verily, brothers, it is worse than to them who are far from quietude. This is because, as the harshness of the hails suddenly falling upon the tips of the plants it will wither and destroy the plants, likewise are the encounters with people, even if those encounters will be very short and seemingly useful, because of withering the flowers of the virtues which have been recently flourishing up out of the company of the quietude, and which dress up with simplicity and with tenderness the tree of the soul planted near the water

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<sup>77</sup> In KJB we have: Ps. 42: 2: "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?"; in ROB we have: Ps. 41: 2: "My soul got thirsted of the living God; when will I come and show myself to the face of God?" (E. l. t.'s n.)

<sup>78</sup> The appeasement isn't idleness, but it is a strained spiritual effort.

springs of the repentance. And as the harshness of the frost falling on the recently sprouted out plant will burn them, likewise will burn the encounter with people the root of the mind which the greenery of the virtues has started sprouting out from. And is the dialogue with them who restrain on themselves in a certain regard, but they still commit small mistakes in other regards, it will hurt the soul, how much more will hurt the soul the dialogue with the stupid and mindless, not to say worldly, and seeing them? This is because, as to the man of noble and honored lineage, when he gets drunk, this feature will be hidden away, and his state will be dishonored, and the honor is mocked by foreign thoughts entering to him through the power of the wine, likewise the righteousness of the soul will be disturbed by looking at the people and by dialoguing with the people; and the soul will forget about the duty of guarding on himself and it will be erased from the soul's cogitation the target of his will and it will be uprooted from within that soul the whole foundation of his worthy to be praised state.

So, if the encounters and the unrestrained looks happening to him who lives in quietude, or the coming close to them due to the desire for seeing and hearing the things entering the gates of the sight and of the hearing, they will reach to cause the straying and the disturbance of the cogitation at the godlike realities, and in a short time they will cause so much harm to the monk who restrains on himself, what will us say about the ceaseless meetings and about the long impeding they cause it?

In addition to those, also the steam arising from the stomach won't let the mind to receive the godlike knowledge, but it will darken the mind, like the mist raising up from the moisture of the ground it makes the air foggy. And the pride cannot see that it walks into darkness and it doesn't know the thoughts of the wisdom. This is because how could the pride know the things happening into its darkness? That's why, through its darkened thought, it raises above all the things, while being inferior and more helpless than all the things and not being able to find out the ways of our Lord. And the Lord hides His will from the pride, because the pride doesn't want to walk the way of the humble. May the glory be forever of our God! Amen.



## **Word XIV**

### **About the Change Appointed by God to Them Who Walk on the Way of the Appeasement**

He who has accepted with his mind to live in quieted, let him organize his life so that to spend the rest of his days in the state of quietude. It can happen to you, as it is the habit into the state of quietude provided to you by the godlike grace, that inside your soul to be overflown the darkness and, like the sunrays are covered by the mist of the clouds coming out of earth, you too to be deprives, and a short while, of the spiritual comforting and the grace's light from within you to be covered by the cloud of your passions, and the producing-of-joy power to withdraw a little and your mind will be covered by an unusual fog. Do not allow yourself to get disturbed on those moments and so to help the nescience of your soul, but endure that and read the books of the teachers and force on yourself to prayer and ask for help. And the grace will immediately come to you, without you even noticing it. This is for the face of the earth is unveiled to the sunrays from under the darkness of the fog that masters upon it, likewise can the prayer to scatter away from within soul the clouds of the passions and to lighten up your mind with the light of the gladness and of the comforting. This light usually stretches also over our thoughts, especially when receiving power out of the godlike Scriptures and when it finds our mind shining into vigil<sup>79</sup>. This is for the continuous occupation with the writings of the saints will fill up our soul with a non-understood light and with the godlike gladness. And the glory to be of our God forever! Amen.

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<sup>79</sup> He who takes vigil won't have the power to persevere in his vigil if he doesn't have God before him, or the depth of God's meanings and love. And these ones fill up our mind and heart with shininess and joy. But he who takes vigil he also prays. That's why it is said about prayer that it penetrates through the darkness set over the soul.

**Word XV**

**About Them Who Appease on Themselves; When They Start  
to Understand where They Have Reached with Their Deed  
on the Infinite Sea, namely in the Peaceful Living; and  
When They Can Hope a Little for Their Toils Will Have  
Started to Bring Them Forth Fruits**

I am going to tell you a thing, and do not doubt about it; do not despise either the other words of mine as belonging to someone too unimportant, for the things I show are true. This is because until now, the hidden things of yours have been serving to the world, namely you have been staying in the service of the worldly things and you have been doing the work of God only through your external man. But your internal man has been fruitless. This is because the fruits start from the tears. Only if you reach their land, you will know that your mind will have escaped the prison of this world and you will have set your foot on the road of the new age<sup>80</sup>, and you have been started smelling that new and wonderful air. Then the tears will start flowing. This is for then the birth of the spiritual child will have come near<sup>81</sup>. This is for the grace, the general mother of all things, it hurries up to give birth within soul a godlike image according to the light of the future age. But when the time of the birth arrives, the mind starts moving in some realities from there, like the breath inhaled by the child inside his limbs, which he usually is nourished through. And because he doesn't easily endure what he is not accustomed to, the child

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<sup>80</sup> In another manuscript: "of the new man".

<sup>81</sup> "The birth of the soul of him who sheds tears consists of feeling the state of our souls into the future age. Above he says: "the mother of everyone hurries up to give birth within soul to a godlike image matching the light of the future age", namely it thinks to embody within the soul a spiritual image, in order to mysteriously see the realities form the future age. And beneath, after tears, there is the peace; after the peace, the resting; after the resting, the view; after the view, the unveiling; after the unveiling, the godlike dwelling; and after that, there is the spiritual fruitfulness. Then he adds: "and this one feels the change it will receive the nature in its inner part of it, within soul, to the renewal of all things". This is for the whole creation will be renewed, according to eth word of Blessed Peter, who says: "We wait for new skied and for a new earth, according to His promise" (2 Pt. 3: 13). This birth was called by the Prophet with his loud voice as "ghost of salvation". This is for Isaiah says: "For your fear, Lord, I have taken into my womb and I felt the pains of the birth and I have given birth to ghost of salvation, whom I made on earth" (6: 18). So, this is the cleanness, out of the godlike bath of the tears. This grace is provided to us by the streams of tears and through this grace we feel the happy state form the future age even before us to be changed".

immediately starts moving his body in a crying mixed with the wetness of the honey. And as the inside child is being nourished, the tears will increase in abundance<sup>82</sup>. This rule of the tears that I have been speaking about, it is not that done with interruptions within them who appease on themselves. For this comforting emerges from time to time, it can be had by anyone who lives in quietude: sometimes, when they are in a state of *vie* (contemplation), some other times when they understand the words of the Scripture; and some other times in the dialogue of the prayer. But I am speaking here about him who ceaselessly sheds tears, day and night.

Anybody who has truly and exactly found out the truth of these two kinds (of tears) he has found it in state of quietude. His eyes reach to be as a water spring for two years or ever for longer. After that he will enter the peace of the thoughts. And from the peace of his thoughts he will enter that resting which Saint Paul spoke about (Hebr. 4: 3), as much as the nature can contain it. And from the resting of the peace, the mind will pass to seeing the mysteries, for the Ghost will start unveiling to the mind the godlike realities and God will dwell within him and God will produce within him the fruit of the Ghost and by that his inner nature will feel as receiving the future change in the general renewal, in a covered manner and as in a riddle. I have written these things in order I to remember them, and for everyone who reads this writing, as I received it from reading the Scriptures and from true mouths and a little from experiencing those, in order they to be of help to me through the prayers of them whom they will be beneficial to. This is for I have made much effort for that.

Listen again to what I am going to tell you now, and what I have learnt from a non-liar mouth. When you enter the land of the peace of your thoughts, the abundance of the tears will be taken away from you, and after that there will come to you the tears, with measure and at the due time. This is the undiminished truth, to say it shortly, as it is believed by the whole Church.

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<sup>82</sup> The ceaseless and unforced tears are the sign of the mind's getting out to the new life, as downpayment for the future age.

**Word XVI****About the Kinds of the Virtues**

The ascesis is the mother of the holiness. And out of the last one it will be born the first tasting of the feeling of the mysteries of Christ, that is called as the first step of the knowledge of the Ghost. But let no one delude on himself and hallucinate some spells. This is because the defiled soul won't ascend to the clean Kingdom, neither will such a soul be united with the ghosts of the saints. Gild up the beauty of your righteousness by tears and fasting and the quietude from within yourself. A small trouble for God is greater than a great thing done without trouble. This is for it willingly tries the faith by love. And the state of resting is born out of the top of the conscience<sup>83</sup>. That's why, in troubles proved the saints their love for Christ, and not in resting. This is because that thing that is done without tiredness it is the righteousness of the worldly ones, who give alms out of the external things and who do not gain anything within themselves<sup>84</sup>. But you, the reader, you fight for following the example of the sufferings of Christ, in order you to be found worthy of tasting His glory. This is for if we suffer together, we will be glorified together. Christ won't be extolled with the mind if the body hasn't been suffering for Christ. So, he will be found worthy of the glory of God who despises the human glory. And his body will be glorified together with his soul. This is for the glory of God comes out of his obedience through righteousness to God. And the glory of the mind is the true view (contemplation) of God. This is for the true obedience is, at its turn, twofold: in deeds and in conscience. Therefore, when the body suffers, the heart suffers together with the body. If you do not know God, His love won't be able to move without you. And you won't be able to love God,

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<sup>83</sup> Out of the higher conscience, that one that knows that it must not get agitated by passing things.

<sup>84</sup> "He calls here as worldly them who cogitate at and who do the things of the world. There can be some righteousness within them too. For instance, they love and they do good to them who do good to themselves, and they lend to them whom they hope to take back from. But this righteousness is not well-received by God (Lk. 6: 32; Mt. 5: 20). And giving alms from exterior things, it means doing that in order us to be seen and extolled by people. And they who give alms for that they won't benefit anything of that. "Verily I say to you, they have taken their payment". (Mt. 6: 4).

if you cannot see Him. And seeing God comes out of knowing Him. This is for seeing God doesn't precede to knowing God.

### **Prayer**

Make me worthy, God, of knowing You and of loving You, not through the knowledge that is into the scattering of the mind, and that is born out of toil, but make me worthy of having that knowledge which the mind, by seeing You, it extolls with the sight Your nature with, that one that removes the feeling of the world from cogitation. Make me worthy of being elevated from the seeing through will, that gives birth to hallucinations, and to see You while I am forced by the tie placed on me by cross, through the second crucifixion of the mind, that rests from the work of the thoughts into ceaselessly seeing You, a sight that is above-nature. Make growing within me Your love, in order I to come on the traces of Your love, existing the world.

Sow in me the understanding of Your humbleness manifested by You while living on earth, under the cover You have made out of our limbs, through the mediation of the Holy Virgin, for, by ceaselessly and non-forgettingly remembering Her, I to receive with pleasure the humbleness of my nature.

There are two ways which one can climb the cross into: one is the crucifixion of the body, and the second one is the climbing to view. The first one is the deliverance of passions, and the second one is the working of the deeds of the Ghost. This is because the mind won't obey if the body hasn't obeyed firstly. The kingdom of the mind supposes the crucifixion of the body. And the mind won't obey God, if the free will doesn't obey the rationality. It is a difficult thing to entrust high things to him who still is a beginner and a child with his age. "Woe to you, city, when your emperor is young" (Eccl. 1: 16). He who submits on himself to God, he has come closer to the power to submit everything to him. This is for in the self-knowledge there is the fullness of the knowledge of all things. And in the obedience of your soul there is comprised the obedience of everything. When the humbleness masters your life, your soul will obey you and together with your soul all the things will

obey you<sup>85</sup>. This is for within your soul will be born the peace from God. As long as you are outside this peace, you will ceaselessly be upset not only by passions, but also by all sorts of happenings. Verily, Lord, if we do not humble on ourselves, you will continue to humble us<sup>86</sup>. And the true humbleness is the daughter of the knowledge. And the true knowledge is the daughter of the trials<sup>87</sup>.

## Word XVII

### **Interpretation of the Diverse Virtues. And about the Strength and about the Discerning of Each of Them**

The bodily virtue cleans up the body of the lusts from within body, in the state of the quietude. And the virtue of the mind humbles the soul and it cleans up the soul of rude and perishing thoughts, in order the mind not to passionately think those thoughts, but in order the mind rather to move itself in the contemplation that is characteristic to it. This contemplation (understanding) characteristic to the soul is the emptying of the mind<sup>88</sup> that is called as immaterial sight. And this is the spiritual virtue. This is for it elevates the mind from the earthly realities and it brings the mind closer to the first contemplation of the ghost and it directs the mind towards God and towards contemplating (seeing) the non-comprised glory

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<sup>85</sup> It is worthy of being remarked this tying of all things to the soul. He who knows on himself he knows all the things within himself. He who controls his soul he will control all the things together with his soul. All the things are connected to man. And that man who controls on himself he controls all the things. And the man controls on himself when he obeys to God, Through God, therefore, the man controls all the things.

<sup>86</sup> God humbles us through troubles and passions, because we do not humble on ourselves willingly. God wants our humbleness. Through humbleness, paradoxically, we master upon all things, for in God we are free of all things.

<sup>87</sup> The knowledge is understood as a gift gained through the lived life, through its difficulties and by enduring those difficulties. It is an existential meaning of the knowledge. Of course, it is about man's self-knowledge, and not about knowing the objects.

<sup>88</sup> It is about "emptying" the mind of any thoughts as these. But as the mind cannot stay unoccupied with something, then the mind will occupy on itself with seeing the endless God, regaining for itself too the feature of the infinite.

that is the movement of the thoughts towards the greatness of His nature. That separates the mind from this world and from feeling this world. And by this we are strengthened in the hope sown within us and in the entrustment found in it. This is the entrustment which the apostle spoke about, or the confirmation which the mind enjoys of, in an understanding manner<sup>89</sup>, through the new hope promised to us (Gal. 5: 8). But what are these and what each of them is like, we are going to tell in the followings.

First, about that living according to God, that one with the body. Bodily deeds are called those done for the cleaning of the body through the work of the virtue; they are shown deeds which somebody cleans on himself of the uncleanness of his body.

And the living through cogitation is the work of the heart, ceaselessly done with the care for the judgment or for the justice of God and for the judgments God will issue, and with the ceaseless prayer of the heart and with the thought at the providence and at the care of God shown in this world for each one individually and for all together. This living consists also of taking heed at the hidden passions, lets they would occur in the hidden and spiritual side. This work of the heart is therefore what it is called living through cogitation. In this work of the living through cogitation, which is called souly doing, the heart will be thinned and separated from the partaking to that disorganized life that is contrary to nature. Starting from here, the mind will understand and it will discern in the contemplation of the created realities, those which have been created for the need and for the growth of the body and the use of which give power to the four natural elements form the body<sup>90</sup>.

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<sup>89</sup> It is an understanding that is a confirmation, surely, or a sight, or a touching and a living of the understood realities.

<sup>90</sup> “The fact that the things created towards the need and the growth of the body, namely the foods and the drinks and the others requires for the need of the body, taken in a due measure and at the due time and by choosing them through judgment, they will bring powers to the natural elements which compose our body, according to each one’s quantity and to the equilibrium among them, we are though by the outside philosophy. Maybe this is called by the saint “living with the mind and souly doing”. This is for the philosophy truly is an exercise of the mind and cogitation and contemplation that thinness up the heart and it separates it from the disordered and contrary to nature life, namely the passionate and animalic life... And it is obvious that the ethical philosophy speaks a lot also about providence and about guarding against passions. That’s why the psalmist says that God will

And the spiritual living is a doing without senses and it is described by the fathers. When this one is received by the minds of the saints, the seeing of things into substance and the thickness of the body will be removed. Since then, the sight will become understanding. This is for the seeing into hypostasis and into substance it is called as seeing the prime creation of the nature<sup>91</sup>. From this seeing into hypostasis, he will easily get elevated him who toils to the knowledge of that unified living, which means wondering of God into the understanding of the seen realities. This one will see in advance that high state of the future goods, which is bestowed into the freedom of the immortal life, in that living from after resurrection. This is for the human nature won't cease there to forever wonder of God, by no longer cogitating at anything from the created realities. This is for, if something among these had been like God, the mind would have moved towards that something, better said sometimes towards God and sometimes towards that something like God. But since the whole beauty of the created things is inferior to the beauty of God, how could the mind, with its sight, to get out of the seeing of God? So, what? Will the mind be saddened by thinking at dying? Will the body's burden upset that mind? Or will the memory of the committed deeds will upset that mind? Or the nature's needs? Or the dangers? Or the unnoticed scattering? Or the engulfing into natural elements? Or the meeting of another? Or the boredom, or the tiresome labor of the body? By no means. This is because despite all of these taking place in this world, at the time when the cover of the passions is being removed from the mind's eyes, and at the time when the mind looks at the glory of God, that mind will

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get angry if we do not take learning (Ps. 2: 1 (in KJB we have: "WHY do the heathen **rage**, and the people imagine a vain thing?"; in ROB we have: "What the nations got furious for, and what the peoples cogitated vanities?" (E. l. t.'s n.))), and the Apostle bears witness that that can make us wise towards salvation" (2 Tim. 3: 15).

<sup>91</sup> The note from the Greek text means, through the "hypostatical seeing" (in substance), that sight of the soul while still united with the body and composing with the body a sole hypostasis. When the thickness of the body ceases, the soul's sight becomes spiritual. But there can be also about seeing the things in their substance, and not in their rationalities unified in God. The hypostatical seeing is, in this case, the seeing of the creation, of the "prime nature", for in its first form in creation too there prevailed the substance. Only in the creation's future form (the second one), the Ghost will overwhelm the material substance.



immediately fall into kidnapping<sup>92</sup>. But if God hadn't placed a border to this (spiritual) life, for how long would the mind have been tarrying within them? And if God had allowed it to the man during this life, the man wouldn't have ever come out from looking at those. And how much more the man won't come out of there, where the material realities no longer are and where the virtue is borderless? Still, there we will have also the things in hypostasis (in substance), but inside the imperial courts, if we will be found worthy of them by our living<sup>93</sup>.

So, how would the mind be able to come out again and how could the mind get far from that wonderful view, in order the mind to fall into another occupation? Woe to us, because we do not know our souls, neither what living we have been called to, but instead we reckon that this live of the helplessness and the state of the realities form this life and the tribulation of the world and the world's evil things and delectations are something valuable.

### **Prayer**

But, oh Christ Who are the only powerful, blessed is him whose help comes from You, and him who has placed high spiritual values into his heart. You, Lord, turn away our deeds from the world, for us to desire You, until we will see what the world is and we will no longer believe the shadow as being the truth. You Who have created us, You renew our mind, Lord, and our endeavor before our death, so that at the time of our exit us to know how it was our entrance in and our exist from this world, until we have accomplished the things which we have been called according to Your will int his life and after that us to hope that we will receive within our full of

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<sup>92</sup> The passions are a thickening of the material cover placed over mind. Better said, the matter is created for being overwhelmed by spirit and to become, by that, transparent. But the passions impede the matter to be crosses through by spirit.

<sup>93</sup> The Greek text is very altered. That's why it allows diverse interpretation, as it is shown in the footnotes to it. Therefore, also the Romanian translation can differ. By and large, we think that Saint Isaac reckons that the things, despite no longer being seen there in their substance, they won't lose this substance, but this substance will be covered by the light of the "imperial courts", or of God. By having there the borderless virtue, the power of our sight will be borderless too, without the border imposed by the body. This is for the virtue is a removal of the thick cover from over the mind, form over the soul, or the transparency inside us, one that had not end. By and large, in this *Word* the author speaks about three kinds of living (or virtues) according to God: with the body, with the cogitation or with the soul, and that one with the ghost or spiritual.

entrustment mind the great goods, on which, according to the promise of the Scriptures, You love has prepared them for us at the second creation of the renewed world. May us guard their remembrance, secretly, by faith!

### **About the Cleanness of the Body, or the Soul, and of the Mind**

The cleanness of the body is the piousness achieved through the deliverance from the defilement of the flesh. The cleanness of the soul means to be the soul free of the hidden passions which move in cogitation. The cleanness of the mind will be shown in the unveiling of the mysteries. This is for then the mind will be cleaned up of all the things which fall under senses, in the way of their thickness<sup>94</sup>. The little children are clean with their body and dispassionate with their soul, but nobody calls them as clean with their mind. So, the cleanness of the mind is the consummation through the living into the heavenly sight characteristic to those groups moving outside senses, through spiritual power, in the countless wonders of that heavenly world. The living of this wonder, they share it among themselves, in their unseen serving, those thin groups, who have the understanding of the unveilings, by being in a connection in their constant changing<sup>95</sup>. And may our God make us too worthy of always seeing Him with our emptied mind, and after the life from here, in an unmediated manner, for ever and ever. Amen.

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<sup>94</sup> The cleaning up of the body of passions, as thickening of the material thickness, then the cleaning up of the soul of the passionate thoughts; finally, the cleaning up of the mind of the itself material substance of the world, perceived through senses as thoughts. But by removing this thickness, there will appear in front of the mind the mysteries of the godlike world. So, the cleaning up of the mind is not only something negative, but it is also something positive: it is the seeing of the godlike horizon that is unveiled to that cleaned up mind.

<sup>95</sup> What is being said here is closet to the vision of Dionysus the Areopagite about the angels.

## Word XVIII

### **How Big is the Measure of the Knowledge and How Big Are the Measures of the Faith**

There is a knowledge that precedes the faith and there is a knowledge that is born out of faith. The knowledge that precedes the faith is the natural knowledge. And the knowledge that is born out of faith is the spiritual knowledge. And there is a natural knowledge that discerns between good and bad. This is also called as natural discernment. By it we can discern between good and bad in a natural manner, without benefiting of a learning. But this gains growth and adding by learning. There is no one not having this natural discernment. This rational soul's natural power of knowledge consists of discerning between good and bad which ceaselessly move within the soul. They who miss this, they are inferior to the rational nature in order His rational creatures to be honored with. And they who have lost this knowledge which they discern between good and bad through, they are condemned by the prophet who said: "The man didn't understand the honor he was in" (Ps. 48: 13<sup>96</sup>).

The honor of the rational nature is the discernment between good and bad. And rightly so, they who have lost this discernment they have resembled to the non-understanding animals, which have no rationality or discernment power. By this power we are able to find out what towards God. This is the natural knowledge that precedes the faith, and that is the way towards God. By natural knowledge we can discern between good and bad and we can receive the faith through it. So, itself the power of the nature bears witness that the man must believe in Him Who brought all the realities to existence, and to believe the words of His commandments and to fulfill them. And out of faith is born the fear of God. And when the man follows to it a little by his deeds, and when he will ascend a little through work, there will emerge the spiritual knowledge, which I told about that it is born out of faith.

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<sup>96</sup> In KJB we have: Ps. 49: 12: "Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish."; in ROB we have: Ps. 48: 12: "And the man, while being into honor, he didn't understand; he joined the mindless beasts and he resembled to them." (E. l. t.'s n.)

The natural knowledge, that is the discernment between good and bad is sown by God into nature, it persuades us to believe in God Who brought all realities to existence. And the faith produces within us the fear and it forces us to repent and to work the good deeds. And by this the man is given the spiritual knowledge, which is the feeling of the mysteries and that give birth to faith out of the true sight (contemplation). So, not out of the sure and simple faith will be born the spiritual knowledge, but the faith gives birth to the fear of God and out of the fear of God, when we are found worthy to work through it, namely out of the work of fear of God within us, it will be born the spiritual knowledge. This is for, as Saint John Chrysostom said, when somebody achieves a will that obeys to the fear of God and to the right-reckoning, that man will soon receive the unveiling of the hidden realities. And by the unveiling of the hidden realities, he means the spiritual knowledge.

But not the fear of God gives birth to this spiritual knowledge (this is because what is not hidden within nature it cannot be born), but this knowledge is given as a gift of the work out of the fear of God. When you will study well the work of the fear of God, you will see that that it is the repentance and into repentance there is the spiritual knowledge. About That one I said that its downpayment is received in Baptism and that this gift we have received it by repentance. So, the gift which we told about that we receive it by repentance, it is the spiritual knowledge, or the spiritual knowledge is the gift give us through the work of the fear.

And the spiritual knowledge is the feeling of the hidden realities<sup>97</sup>. This is for, when somebody feels these: unseen and much-overwhelming goods, he will give this feeling the name of spiritual knowledge. And out of this feeling there is born another faith, that is not opposite to the first faith, but it will strengthen that first faith. I call this faith by sight (by contemplation). Until here it has been the hearings and now it is the sight. And the sight is surer than the hearing.

All of these are born out of that (natural) knowledge which discerns between good and evil, and that is sown within nature. And this is the good seed of the virtue, as it was said

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<sup>97</sup> Saint Isaac identifies the spiritual knowledge to a spiritual feeling, namely to a touching of the godlike reality or the power of God.

before. But when we cover up this natural knowledge with our loving-of-pleasure will, we will fall off all these goods.

And this natural knowledge is followed by a pricking of the conscience, a ceaseless remembrance of the death, a worry that torments us until we leave this life<sup>98</sup>. After this, it will come to us the grief, the sadness, the fear of God, the natural shame, the sorrow for the previous sins, the striving for the due deeds, the remembering of the general road and of the victuals for our travel and of the ask directed towards God with crying, in order us to enter this gate that is the crossing above all the nature, the despising of the world and the much struggle for virtue. All of these are in the natural knowledge.

Let them anybody to liken his deeds to these ones. And if the man is in these, he will walk the way of the nature. And when the man is elevated above these and when he reaches the love, he will be elevated above nature and the struggle and the fear and the tiredness and the toil will leave him in all aspects. This is for these ones belong to the natural knowledge. And we find these within us when we do not cover up this natural knowledge with our loving-of-pleasure will. And the natural knowledge is within us until we reach the love that liberates us from all of these.

Out of the said things, let the man look at himself and to examine which are the deeds he walks in: in those contrary to nature, in those according to nature, or in those from above-nature. Out of their kinds one can find limpidly and quickly how he governs his whole life. And when he is not in those called by us as according-to-nature, as we showed them, and he is neither in those above-nature, it will be obvious that he will have been thrown into the ones from below-nature. And forever be the glory of our God! Amen.

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<sup>98</sup> "Three or the man's states, as the saint is going to tell a little further: that according to nature, that contrary to nature, and that above-nature. When, by falling off the nature, we end to be in the contrary-to-nature state, the natural knowledge ceaselessly pricks our conscience and it keeps ceaselessly awake the remembrance of the death and a worry that torments our soul until we will get out of it, namely until we will get out of this contrary-to-nature state and until we come back to that according-to-nature state. Then, again, the natural knowledge gives birth to trouble and to sadness and to the fear of God and to the shame, and to the striving, and to the remembrance of the death and to the taking care for the victuals for our travel. And it is even persuading us to ask from God, with much crying and tears "to enter that gate", namely to enter that above-nature state".

**Word XIX****About Faith and about the Humble Cogitation**

You all-tiny creature, do you want to find the life? Keep within you the faith and the humbleness, for through them you will find the mercy, the help, and the words spoken within heart by God, and you will also find Him Who guard you into hidden and Who remains with you manifestly<sup>99</sup>. Do you want to earn these which are blessings of the life<sup>100</sup>? Walk before God with simplicity and not into knowledge. This is because to simplicity it follows the faith, and to the thinness and to the dispute of the thoughts it follows the self-appreciation. And this one is followed by the getting far from God. When you come before God through prayer, you will make on yourself in your thinking as an ant and as the creatures crawling on earth and as a worm, and as a stuttering little-child. And to not say before God something bases on knowledge, but you come closer to God and walk before Him as you would have a little-child thinking, in order you to be found worthy of the parental taking-of-care that is directed from the parents towards their sons who still are little children. This is for it was said: “guarding of the little children is the Lord” (Ps. 114: 6<sup>101</sup>). The little child gets close to the snake and grabs the snake by its neck and he won’t be harmed by that snake. The little child walks naked the whole winter. When other walk dressed up and covered and the cold still penetrates through all their limbs, the little child sits naked on the cold day, when is frost and ice, the little child doesn’t suffer, for his innocent body is covered with another unseen coat through that hidden care that upholds his delicate limbs in order no harm to come close to them from anything.

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<sup>99</sup> By faith and humbleness, we will feel the word of God spoken by Him on each moment within our heart, namely not like some words uttered yore by God and not detached from Him. That’s why, we feel God Himself as Person too, as talking to us. We o feel God, hiddenly, as talking to us, and we feel God manifestly, by helping us in our deeds.

<sup>100</sup> The word of God felt within heart are therefore blessings of God, addressed to us now and which uphold our life with the power of God communicated through His words.

<sup>101</sup> In KJB we have: Ps. 116: 6: “The Lord preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.”; in ROB we have: Ps. 114: 6: “He Who guards the little children is the Lord; I was humiliated and I was delivered.” (E. l. t.’s n.)

Do you believe now that there is a hidden taking-of-care, through which the delicate body, easily exposed to any harm because of its delicateness and weakness, it still is guarded among the unfavorable circumstances, and it is not allowed to suffer from those? This is for the Lord says: "The Lord guards the children". And not only the children, who have small bodies, but also the wisemen from the world who have left their knowledge and they lean on the simple wisdom, and who have made on themselves children in their will, and to they have learnt that wisdom that cannot be learnt through toils. Those are they whom the wiseman in the godlike realities, Paul, said: "He who reckons about himself that he is wise in this world let him make on himself insane, in order him to reach to be wise" (1 Cor. 3: 18).

So, you ask from God to give you to reach at the measure of the faith. And if you feel the delectation of the faith within your soul, it won't be hard to me to tell you again that nothing will impede you to reach at Christ. And it won't be difficult you to be kidnapped all the time from the earthly realities and to forgive about this helpless world and about the memories of the world's things. You pray, unhesitatingly, for this, and beg for it warmly, and ask if with much zeal, until you will receive it. And neither you will weaken that effort even after you have received that. And you will be found worthy of that if you, firstly, strive to cast your worry upon God with faith, and if you change your worry for the taking-care from God. And when you will see that your will trusts God more than yourself, with the whole cleanness of your thought, and when you see that you strive to hope in God more than in your soul, then will come and dwell within you that power unknown to you. And you will feel the power of Him Who is within you, in a doubtless manner; that power that many of them who feel it enter the fire and they do not fear trampling on water and they do not doubt their thought by reckoning that they will sink. This is for the faith strengthens the soul's senses and the soul will feel Somebody unseen Who convinces the soul not to take in account the fearsome things neither to look at some view that exceeds the senses<sup>102</sup>.

Maybe you reckon that that spiritual knowledge it received by somebody in the souly knowledge? But it is not only

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<sup>102</sup> Not to search to reach before time at views exceeding the senses.

impossible that somebody to receive the spiritual knowledge into the souly knowledge, but he won't even be able to feel it with the feeling<sup>103</sup>, as they cannot be found worthy of it, they who strive appropriating it in their souly knowledge.

Thus, if some of them want to come closer to that knowledge of the Ghost, they won't be able to come closer to it at all, until they forsake the souly knowledge and the whole occupation with its subtleties and with its very intricate (complicate) craftsmanship and if they do not turn back to their children-like souls. This is because of experiencing strong impediments by being accustomed to it, until they will remove it little by little. The spiritual knowledge is simple and doesn't shine through souly thoughts<sup>104</sup>. Until the cogitation is not freed of the many ideas, and until the cogitation hasn't come to the simplicity of the cleanness, he won't be able to receive the knowledge of the Ghost. The step of this knowledge consists of feeling the delectation of the future age. That's why, you must despise the many ideas! This is for this souly knowledge cannot know something else than ideas; it cannot know what is received into the simplicity of the cogitation<sup>105</sup>, according to Him Who said: "If you do not turn back and become like the little children, you won't be able to enter the Kingdom of Heavens" (Mt. 18: 3). But many do not reach this simplicity but they trust their good deeds, by reckoning that through those good deeds a place in the Kingdom of Heavens will be prepared to them. This is the way they understand the *Blessings* from the Gospel<sup>106</sup>. They say that the Lord showed those good deeds as diverse, so that we could see that He made us known many types of living

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<sup>103</sup> The spiritual knowledge can be felt too, but with a feeling that is above-feeling, as Saint Gregory Palamas showed it latter.

<sup>104</sup> The souly knowledge, regardless how complicate, it moves among the realities of the world, or even when it talks to God it moves in definitions and subtleties construed about God from distance. The spiritual knowledge is the unmediated experience of God. This knowledge about God out of experience it cannot occur except into that soul cleaned up of any ideas which keep the man into the things thought by him and in separation from God. Through this knowledge one can perceive the life of the future age and one can speak spiritually about that.

<sup>105</sup> "Perhaps this word wants to say that they who have the soul's knowledge, namely the wisemen according to the body, except many syllogisms and conclusions do not receive anything from the things understood by them who have achieved, through the simplicity into Christ, the spiritual knowledge". The spiritual knowledge it means knowing by experience the work of God. Only thus can be truly known, and not through the multitude of ideas construed by us, ideas that rather interpose between us and God.

<sup>106</sup> By this, Saint Isaac doesn't contest the value of the good deeds, but the good deeds do not have an intrinsic value, but only if they transform the man or make the man better.



according to those *Blessings*. They say that to each man, according to all measures he walks on any way towards the Lord, the Lord will open him a door towards the Kingdom of Heavens. But that spiritual knowledge won't be received by somebody except if he turns and become like a little child. And out of this one can feel that delectation of the Kingdom of Heavens.

The Kingdom of Heavens they say (the saints) that is the spiritual sight. And this is not in the deeds of the thoughts, but it can only be tasted by grace. And until the man doesn't clean up on himself, he won't be able to hear about it (with his understanding), because no one can achieve that by learning. If you reach, oh, my son, to the cleanness of your heart, by faith, one achieved by leaving in peace far from people, and if you forgive about the knowledge of this world, in order you not to feel it anymore, the spiritual knowledge will suddenly occur before you, without any research regarding it. "Stick, he says, a pillar and pour oil on it and you will find a treasure within your bosom". But if you are hold back by the chain of the souly knowledge, it won't be wrong if a tell you that it is easier you to unchain on yourself from the iron chains than from it. And you won't ever escape the traps of the straying, and you won't eve achieve the daring and the trust towards Him, but you will constantly go towards the edge of the sword and you won't even be able to get rid of grief. You pray in weakness and simplicity, in order you to live rightly before God, and you will be worriless. This is for, as the shadow follows the body, likewise the mercy follows the humbleness. Som if you want to walk into these, you won't stretch your hand to the helplessness thoughts, by any means. And even if you are surrendered and scarred by all the harms and evil things and dangers, you won't be worried about those, neither will you take them in account.

If you have believed once in the Lord Who suffices for your guarding, and if you walk on Lord's traces, you won't ever be worried again by some of these, but you will tell to your soul: "It is enough to me Him Whom I have surrendered my soul to. It is not me here. He knows"<sup>107</sup>. And then you will see the wonderful realities of God. You will see how close is Him always, in order Him to deliver them who fear Him; and hos He

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<sup>107</sup> When you throw all your worries upon God, you will be able to say: it is not me here, for it is not me worrying about the thing I need. He knows and He fulfills.

surrounds them and receives them with His taking-of-care. You mustn't doubt about Him, by reckoning that He is not present, for Your guardian Who is with you, He doesn't look with human eyes. And He often unveils on Himself even to the human eyes, in order to encourage you.

When the man casts away from him any seen help and any hope in people and when he follows to God faithfully and when he looks at God with his heart, then the grace will immediately come and unveil him his helping power in many ways. In the first place, in the shown things and in the things referring to body, showing him help by His taking-of-care, so that he will be able to feel in these even more the power of His taking-of-care regarding him. And by seeing these in the shown things, he will be assured about the hidden things too, as he owes to be in his child-like cogitation and behavior. And he will be assured that his need will be satisfied without his deed or care. And this helps him crossing over many happenings which come upon him, often full of dangers, without him seeing those. This is for the grace unnoticeably banishes those away from him, in a very wonderful manner, and the grace guards him like a mother who stretches her wings over her chicks, so that no danger will come close to them; and it will show him that his perdition was near to him but he has still remained unharmed. So, the grace accustoms him also to the hidden realities and it unveils him the trap of the reckonings and of the difficult thoughts, which are non-understandable. And thus, he will easily find their meaning and their connections and their delusion and on which one he has attached on himself, and how the thoughts are born one out of another and how they together destroy the soul.

And he will shame in his eyes all the devil's traps and the dwelling of the thoughts, and he will bring understanding within himself, in order him to know the future things. And it will make to occur in its simplicity a hidden light, so that to be able to understand in all things the meaning of the subtlest thoughts and it will show him as with the finger what he could suffer if he didn't know those. And then it will be born within him, out of this, the thought that each small of big thing must be asked for, by him, in his prayer addressed to his Maker.

And when the godlike grace strengthens his thought through all of these, in order him to trust God, he starts entering, gradually, in trials. This is for God allows to be sent

him trials according to his measure, in order him to be able to endure their burden. And even in trials it comes close to him the help in a felt manner, in order him to have courage, until he will get gradually accustomed and he will achieve the wisdom and so he will be able to despise his enemies, by trusting God. This is for it is impossible him to get wise without these in his spiritual fights and him to know his care-Taker and him to feel his God and his faith in God to strengthened within him in hiddenly, except though the trials he has received.

But when the grace sees that it has started to occur a little in his thought the self-appreciation and he has started thinking something big about himself, the grace will immediately allow the trials coming upon him to get stronger, until he will know his weakness and until he will try to achieve God into humbleness. And by this the man comes to the measures of the consummate man into the faith and into the hope into the Son of God and he will ascend to love. This is for the love of God I it will be shown wonderful to the man, when the man is among circumstances which cut off any hope of his. In those God shows His power that saves the man. This is for the man won't even know the godlike power when he is in peace and at large. And GO has never shown His work in a felt manner except in the land of the peace and in wilderness and in placed where lack any encounters with the people and which lack the disturbance coming from the together-living with people.

Do not wonder when, by setting a beginning to the virtue, there will spring out harsh and big troubles against you from all quarter. This is because of not being reckoned as virtue that one that is not accompanied by hardships in working it. This is for itself the name of the virtues comes from here, as Saint John said: "It is usual to come upon virtues the hardships. And it is worthy to be despised that virtue that is accompanied by peace". This is for Saint Mark the Monk said: "All the done virtue ids called as cross, when it fulfills the commandment of the Ghost. That's why, let all of them who live in asceticism to live in the fear of the Lord and into Jesus Christ they will be persecuted" (2 Tim. 3: 12). This is for he says: "If somebody want to follow Me, let him reject on himself and take his cross and follow Me" (Mk. 8: 34). If one doesn't want to live in peace, but he loses his souls for Me, he will find his soul. That's why he has taken in before you and he has placed your cross before

you, in order you to choose the death against you and so you will persuade your soul to follow Him.

There is nothing stronger than not having hope (in the earthly ones). This cannot be defeated by anything, either from the left or from the right. The greatest courage will be had by that monk who has cut off from his mind the hope in this life. Then there won't be any enemy to stop him in his way and there won't be any trouble whose gravity to weaken up his thought, because any trouble that can come upon him still will be bellow death. And he has accepted to receive the death. If everywhere and in everything an at any time and in everything you want to do, you set as your target in your thought to endure the trouble, not only that you will be courageous and tireless in fighting any hardship, but by the power of your thoughts will run away from your all your feelings of fear which scare you and which usually are born within man out of the thoughts which tend to peace. And all the difficult and harsh things which happen to you, they will seem to you as easy and facile. And often the things coming to you will be contrary to your troubles expected by you, and it might be that no troubles will happen to you. You know that the hope to the peace always removes form withing people any thought as great and good works of the virtues. And they who take care in this world of the things of their body, they won't be able to reach the consummation of their will, if they do not reckon in their cogitation that is better to them to endure the hardships. And again, for the experience bears witness about this, we do not need to prove it by words. Among each generation of people since now, we cannot see anything else weakening the people so that they not to be victorious and not to be deprived of the good things, except by this. That's why we also say it briefly, that one doesn't despise the Kingdom of Heavens except by trusting the things from here. And he doesn't suffer only this, but harsh troubles and hard trials will be prepared to each man who fulfills his will and whose thoughts go and move towards this. This is because of him being guided by his lust.

Who doesn't know that the birds are caught in the snare when they search for resting? Won't be our knowledge inferior to that of the birds by the similar things happening to us in the hidden things, or by the things coming upon us un an unveiled manner in some aspects, or in some places, or in other which

the devil hunts us through, since the beginning, by the promise of and by the thought at resting?

But lo that, by the nature of that thought that wants to run on the line of the word, we have deviated from the purpose declared by us at the beginning of our word. This is for we have started to show that all the time we must think at all troubles coming upon us in all things which we want to start with, our road towards our Lord, and in our advancing towards the end we must zealously lean on ourselves on that beginning. But for how many times does the man ask on himself when he wants to start a thing for the Lord: it is there any resting in this? Or it is possible I to do that easily, without toil? Or it is in this some trouble that will cause pain to my body? Don't we search for the resting? What do you have to say, man? Do you want to ascend to heavens and to achieve there the Kingdom of God and the partaking with Him and the resting of the happiness from there and the partaking with the angels and that life without death, but you still ask if this road is tiresome? Behold a bewildering thing: They who want the things of the present life which disintegrate, they cross the fearsome waves of the sea and they dare to start traveling on harsh paths, and they still don't want to know that there is a tiredness in those things and a sadness in the things which they want to do. And we ask in all places about resting. But if we want all the time to start walking on the road of the crucifixion, we will understand that any hardship will be easier than this.

Is it there anyone who is not totally convinced that nobody has ever obtained the victory in war, that nobody has even received the unshown crown, that nobody has reached to fulfill this desire, which is one among those worthy of praising, or that nobody has served something from among the godlike things, or nobody has ever received a virtue among those virtues worthy of praising, if he hasn't firstly despised the troubles and banished from near him the thought urging him to rest and that gives birth to idleness, to hesitation, and to fear, out of which comes the drowsiness in all things?

When the mind aspires to virtue, the shown senses, namely the sight, the hearing, the smelling, the tasting, and the touching, they won't allow to be themselves defeated by opposite, foreign, and different from the usual ones, and over the border of the natural power hardships. And when the natural wrath does its work at its appropriate time, the body's

life will be more despise than the garbage. When the heart zealously beats withing body, that body won't get sad in troubles, neither that body will shun the troubles because of fear, but the mind will uphold that body in all trials so that that body to remain steadfast in its perseverance. Let's therefore strengthen the zeal of our ghost for the will of Jesus and the whole idleness will be banished away from us, because of out of idleness is born within our though the whole carelessness. This is for the zeal gives birth to daring and to the power of the soul and to the endeavor of the body. What power will the devils have if the soul moves his zeal powerfully against them? The urge towards work it is called as the daughter of the zeal. And when the work passes its power into deed, it will strengthen all the force within soul, and it makes that force fearless. And themselves the crows of the confession received by heroes and by martyrs in their perseverance, they are achieved through these two things: by zeal and by the good urge, which are born out of the power of the natural wrath. This is for they reach to be dispassionate in the awful pain of the torments<sup>108</sup>. May God gives us too such an urge, in order us to be well-pleasant to Him! Amen.

## **Word XX**

### **How Much Honor Achieved the Humble-Cogitation and How Much Higher Its Step Is**

I want to open my mouth, brothers, and to tell you about the high theme of the humble-cogitation. But I am getting full of fear, as one who knows that I am going to speak about God Himself, in the way of my words. Actually, the humble-cogitation is the coat of God. This is for the Word by embodying on Himself, He put the humble-cogitation on and through this humble-cogitation He spoke to us while bearing our body. And everyone who has put on the coat of the humble-cogitation, he

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<sup>108</sup> Another remarkable paradox: through zeal, the martyrs, though they endure the awful pains of the torments, they no longer feel those pains. The supreme suffering becomes the supreme dispassion. This is for the power of God, that is within them, it overwhelms the pain of the suffering.

has truly become like Him Who descended from His height and Who hid the power of His greatness and Who covered His glory into the humble-cogitation, in order the creation not to be burnt by seeing Him. This is because the creation couldn't have looked at Him if He had not taken a part of it and if He hadn't talked to the creation; neither could have the creation listened to the words of His mouth face to face<sup>109</sup>.

This is because neither the sons of Israel could have heard His voice when He spoke them out of the cloud. And that's why He told to Moses: "Let God to speak through You and you to tell His words, so that not to talk God to us and us to die" (Exod. 20: 19). So, how could have the creation received His view? "This is because so fearsome is the view of God, so that the mediator said: (I am full of fear and of tremble" (Acts 7: 32). This is for the power of His glory was shown on Mount Sinai. And the mount was smoking and trembling because of the fear of His unveiling, so that the wild beasts which came near to the lowest parts of the mountain died. And the sons of Israel prepared on themselves by washing on themselves up, according to Moses's commandment, for three days, in order they to be worthy of listening to the voice of God and to be worthy of seeing God's unveiling. And when the time came, they couldn't stand the sight of His light and the power of His thunder voice.

But now, when His grace has been pored over the world by His coming, he didn't descend in earthquake, neither in fire, nor in fearsome and powerful voice, but as in a smooth rain and as in a droplet smoothly falling on the ground. And He showed on Himself talking to us in another manner. This happened when He covered His glory as a treasure, under the cover of His body, and He talked to us from among us, through that cover composed by His will out of the bosom of the Virgin and Birth Giver of God Mary<sup>110</sup>, in order us by seeing Him as belonging to our kind and talking to us, us not to get scared by seeing Him.

That's why everyone who has put on the coat which Jesus showed on Himself in, into the body which dressed the Creator up, that one has dressed himself up in Christ Himself. This is for the countenance which He showed on Himself in to His

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<sup>109</sup> This text and everything that follows is anti-Nestorian. The words of Jesus Christ were the words of God, and not of the man.

<sup>110</sup> The expression "born out of God" shows Saint Isaac, again, as anti-Nestorian.

creation and which He lived in His creation with, He wanted that to be put on His inward man<sup>111</sup> and in it He showed on Himself wearing it, to those who were together-slaved with Him. And instead of putting on an exterior coat of glory and honor, He has adorned on Himself with it (inwardly). That's why, by looking at every man who has put on this likeness, the speaking and quiet creation<sup>112</sup> worships its Master, for the honor of its Master Who the creation saw dressed in itself and living in itself. This is for what creature won't get ashamed if seeing him who is humble in thought<sup>113</sup>? But until the glory of the humble-cogitation hadn't been unveiled to everyone, its full of holiness look was easily despised. But now it has sprung out to the world's eyes its greatness and the man honors everywhere the seen likeness of it<sup>114</sup>. And in this Mediator the creation was found worthy to receive the view of its Creator and Maker<sup>115</sup>. That's why too, neither the enemies of the truth can easily despise this one. This is for, despite he who has achieved it is poor in those of the creation, he is honored for having it as for having a crown and a purple coat, by him who knew it<sup>116</sup>. Him who is humble in thought he will never be despised by man; he won't be offended, and he won't be disregarded. Once the Master love him, he will be loved by everyone. He loves the poor and everyone love him. Everyone desire him and everywhere he

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<sup>111</sup> He didn't put on the human nature only exteriorly, but He made the human nature interior to Himself, namely He made on Himself man inwardly as well, like the body becomes interior to the soul and inversely. But this means that He put on our humbleness all the way to the interior of His godhead. The humbleness is His human coat, because it doesn't belong to the human nature, but it is a coat that penetrated into His interior as hypostasis, as Person.

<sup>112</sup> "All the speaking and quiet creation", namely endowed with spirit and without spirit, it worships that man who has dressed on himself in that humbleness as the embodied Word. The humbleness is the true likeness of the man to the embodied Word Who has imbued it in with His godlike greatness.

<sup>113</sup> He who is humble in his thought he is like Christ.

<sup>114</sup> "He honors everywhere its seen likeness", namely the humble-cogitation of Christ, imitated by a man or another, or better said, which the believer has been penetrated by, in union with Christ.

<sup>115</sup> It can be about Christ, or about that man who imitates the humble-cogitation, or who is full with it, by the union with Christ. This is for both Christ and the man who imitates the humble-cogitation, or who is full with it, he is a mediator of the Creator or of His glory, for by humbleness the Son of God has made on Himself as Mediator between God and people.

<sup>116</sup> They who tormented Christ they unwillingly honored His humbleness, with crown and purple coat. Likewise, are honored unwillingly, all the ones who imitate His humbleness, as by wearing a crown and a purple coat, especially the monks who despise all the glory form the world. Even those who are embarrassed by it, they showed by that that they honor the humbleness.



goes he will appear as an angel of light, and much honor it will be shown him. And when the wise and the teacher speaks, they stop, for they pass the word to the humble. Everyone's eyes look at his mouth in order they to see what is coming out of it. And every man waits for his word as for the words of God. His few words are like the wisemen's words who research the meanings of the words. His words are to the hearing of the wiseman sweeter than honey. Everyone receives him like on God, though his word is simple and unadorned and humble at sight.

He who speaks with contempt against him who is humble in thought and who doesn't honor him as a living man, he is like one who has opened his mouth against God. But even if he is despised by the whole creation, his honor will still last. The humble one is approached by the killer beats and when those look at him their savageness is tamed up and they come to him as to their master. And they lean down their heads and they lick his hands and feet, for out of them it is being spread that fragrance that was being spread out of Adam before his falling (when the wild beasts gathered around Adam and he gave them their names, in Paradise). That is the fragrance that was take from us and that has been renewed and it had been give to us by His coming, by Jesus. This is the good fragrance that is spread as a chrism out of the man-kind (2 Cor. 2: 15).

And again, when he comes closer to the bringing-of-death reptiles and, immediately he touched their body with his hand, the harshness and the strength of their causing-of-death venom stops, and he break them in pieced with his bare hands as on some locusts. When he comes closer to people, they look at him as at the Lord. But what am I saying about people? Even the devils, with their harshness, and with their evilness, and with the pride of their thought, when they come close to him, they are destroyed. And the whole their cunningness is getting stupid and their plots are scattered away and their evilness it stopped.

But now, after we have shown the glory and the honor of the humbleness coming from God, and that power hidden within humbleness, let's show, finally, what the humbleness itself is, and when the man is found worthy of fully receiving it as it is. But let's discern between the shown humbleness and that one from him who has been found worthy of the true humbleness.

The humbleness is a mysterious power received by the consummate saints after the consummation of their entire living. This power is given only to the who are consummate in virtue, by the power of the grace, as much as it can be contained within the borders of the nature. This is for the virtue contains in itself everything. That's why, one cannot reckon any man, haphazardly, as humble in thought, but, as I said, only on those who have been found worthy of this step.

Not everyone who is gentle and peaceful, or understanding and gentle by nature, has reached the step of the humble-cogitation. But truly humble in his thought is him who secretly had something worthy of boasting with but he doesn't boast with it, but he reckons that, in his thought, as totally insignificant. But we do not call as humble in his thought either on him who get humbled while remembering his sins and his mistakes, when he remembers those before getting crushed in his heart, and for lowering his cogitation from the thoughts of pride during their coming, thought his thing is worthy of praising too. This is for, as long as he still has a thought of pride, he will still hasn't achieved the humbleness, but he attempts to bring it closer to him by diverse craftsmanships. Even if this thing too is worthy of praising, he still doesn't have the humbleness but he only wants it. The consummate humble-cogitation it had by him who doesn't need to search for reasons for his thought to be humble, but he who has achieved the humble-cogitation he has it in all aspects in a consummate and natural manner, without forcing on himself to it. This is for he has received it within himself as a great gift (charisma) that surpasses the whole creation and nature. But he sees on himself in his eyes as a sinner and worthy of being despised. Although he has entered the mysteries of all spiritual beings and he is consummate in detailed knowledge of the whole creation, he reckons about himself as not knowing anything. And this one is like that within his heart without using any craftsmanships<sup>117</sup> and without forcing on himself.

But, is it possible to the man to become like this and to change on himself like this by nature, or it isn't?

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<sup>117</sup> "Which are the craftsmanships attracting the humbleness? To remember somebody his sins, to reckon on himself as totally insignificant, to see on himself as one who hasn't done anything good, and the followings. It is worthy of praising also the humbleness that one gains it out of craftsmanships, but it is not a consummate humbleness".

Do not doubt the fact that the power for these mysteries, which the man has received it, it consummates these within him, by helping him to progress in all virtue with the deed. This is the power received by the blessed apostles as a fire (Acts 1: 4). In order to be the Apostles given this, our Savior commanded them not to get far from Jerusalem, until they will receive the power from above. Jerusalem means virtue, and the power means humbleness. The power from above is the Comforter, or the Ghost of the comforting. That's why is told in the godlike Scripture about Him that through Him are unveiled the mysteries to them who are humble in soul<sup>118</sup>. On this Ghost of the unveilings Who shows the mysteries, are found worthy of receiving Him within themselves, they who are humble in their heart. And that's why was told by some of the saints that remaining humble when seeing godlike view it will consummate your soul. Therefore, let the man not to cogitate that he has reached in his soul the measure of the humble-cogitation, through a thought of pricking that has ascended to him somewhen, or for a few tears coming out of him, or for a sole good had by him naturally or forcedly; let him not think that he has reached the fullness of the mysteries and that he is the dwelling place of the virtues, or that by small deeds he has gained all of these and by himself he has reached at this charisma.

But only when he will have defeated all the enemy ghosts, and when he will have not misses any part of all the virtues which he would have not worked it in a proven manner and which he would have not gained it, but he will have defeated and submitted all the fortifications of the enemies; only after that he will feel this charisma within himself and only then "The Ghost will confess to his ghost", according to the word of the apostle (Rom. 8: 16), in order him to know that he has achieved the consummation of the humble-cogitation. Blessed is him who has gained this, for he always kisses the bosom of Jesus and he embraces Him.

But is somebody asked: "What should I do" What can I gain it like? How will I become worthy of receiving it? Because, lo, I am striving on myself, and when I reckon that I have

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<sup>118</sup> This is not literally said into the Holy Scripture. It perhaps was understood like that the word: "He give grace to the humble ones" (Acts 3: 34), or the word: "You have hidden these from wise and from skilled and you have unveiled them to the little-children" (Mt. 11: 25).

achieved it, I see in my thinking moving thoughts which are opposite to humbleness. And that's why I fall into despair". Him who asks such questions, you will answer: "It suffices to the disciple to be like his teacher, and to the servant to be like his Lord" (Mt. 10: 25). Look at Him Who said that and at Him Who has bestowed the charisma, as you have achieved it, and be yourself like Him, and you will find that. This is for Himself said: "The ruler of this world comes and finds nothing within Me" (Jn. 14: 30). Can you see that only in the consummation of all the virtues can one achieve the humbleness? Let's follow the example of Him Who said: "The foxes have dens and the fowls of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has no place where to lean His head down" (Mt. 8: 20). This is for He has the glory of all of them who have been consummated and sanctified and fulfilled in all generations, together with the Father Who has sent Him and with the Holy Ghost, now and ever and forever and ever. Amen.

### **Word XXI**

#### **What Helps the Man to Come Close to God in His Heart. Which is the True Cause Hiddenly Giving the Man this Help and Again Which is the Cause Leading the Man to Humbleness**

Blessed is that man who knows his weakness. This is for this knowledge becomes to him a foundation and a root and a beginning of all kindness. This is for when somebody finds out and he truly feels his helplessness, he gathers his soul out of the drowsiness that darkens his conscience and he gathers his treasure under guard. But no one will be able to feel his weakness if he is not allowed a little to experience the things which cause pain either to his body or to his soul. This is for, at that moment, by comparing his weakness to the help coming from God, he will know the greatness of God. And again, while seeing the multitude of his craftsmanships and his guarding and his restraint, and his cover and fencing up of his soul, which he trusted to gain trust in himself through, but he hasn't gained that, and he sees that his heart has not peace because of fear and tremble, he will understand and he will know that

his fear shows him that he misses somebody to help him. This is for the heart bears witness of the fear burning it and waging war to is inwardly, that it misses somebody. And that's why the heart is rebuking on itself and it won't be able to dwell into trust.

This is for the one that saves, he says, if the help from God<sup>119</sup>. And when somebody knows that he is deprived of the help from God, he does many prayers and the more he multiplied his prayers the more he gets humbler in his heart. This is for to anybody who prays and asks it will be impossible not to get humbled. And "the crushed and humble heart God won't curse it" (Ps. 50: 19<sup>120</sup>). So, until he doesn't get humble in his heart, he won't be able to stop on himself from scattering. This is for the humbleness gathers the heart together. And when the man gets humbled, the mercy surrounds him immediately, and then the heart feels the help from God. This is for there is a trust power moving within it. And when the man feels the godlike help as present and helping him, his heart immediately is being filled up with faith and he understands by that that the prayer is the means which he can find help through, and it is a spring of comforting and it is a treasure of trust and it is a realms saving him from storm and it is a light to them who are in to darkness and it is a support to the weak and it is cover during trials and it is a help into the hiding of the illnesses and it is a deliverer shield in wars and it is a sharp arrow against his enemies and, simply speaking, he understands that the whole multitude of these goods have their entrance within him by his prayers. And that why he is delighted now into the prayer of the faith.

And his heart is lightened up by trust and he no longer is in the petrification and in the simple speaking of his mouth which he was in before. And when he knows these ones thus, he achieves the prayer within his soul as a treasure. And due to much gladness, the way of his prayer changes in voicing thanks. This is the meaning of the word said by him who appointed to each thing his image, that "the prayer is a joy

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<sup>119</sup> It could be the Psalm 120: 2: "My help comes from my Lord". (In KJB we have: Ps. 121: 2 (E. l. t.'s n.))

<sup>120</sup> In KJB we have: Ps. 51: 17: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."; in ROB we have: Ps. 50: 18: "The sacrifice of God; the humiliated ghost; the defeated and humble heart won't be cursed by God." (E. l. t.'s n.)

raising up thanks”<sup>121</sup>. And by that he meant to that prayer that consummates the knowledge of God, namely that prayer sent by God. This is for then the man no longer prays with tiredness and toil, as the prayer from before has been done before sensing the grace of this last kind of prayer, but it is being done with the joy of the heart and with the kidnapping which ceaselessly spring out of, the movements of thanking, and with untold kneelings; and due the grace’s movement into knowledge and on the bewilderment produces by the grace of God, he raises his voice praising God and extolling God and raising Him thanks and, while being very bewildered, he moves his tongue.

If somebody has truly reached here, and not only in his imagination, he has noticed some signs or this state within himself and he has known many exquisite goods for his much testing. He understands what that says and he doesn’t resist it. That’s why not he stops thinking at the vain things and he perseveres next to God by ceaseless prayer, because of fearing to be him deprived of the multitude of the help from God.

All these goods are born within man by the fact that he knows his weakness. This is for, due to the much desire for the help from God, he close closer to God by persevering into prayer. And the closer he comes to God, the closer will come God to him as well, with His gifts, and God won’t remove from him His grace, due to his great humbleness. This is for him, as the widow, he ceaselessly shouts out towards the Judge to be him granted his justice. That’s why the Guide God stops bestowing his grace to the man, so that to be cause for the man coming closer to God, and by feeling his need him to persevere next to Him Who all the useful things spring out of. And which

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<sup>121</sup> There are three kinds of prayers. First, for instance: “Praise my soul the Lord, I will praise the Lord in my life” (Ps. 145: 1 (in KJB we have: Ps. 146: 1)). Then, the giving of thanks, for instance: “Confess yourself to the Lord, for He is good” (Ps. 117: 1 (in KJB we have: Ps. 118: 1)). Then the asking, for instance: “Heave mercy on me, God” (Ps. 50: 1 (in KJB we have: Ps. 51: 1)), or: “Mys God, take heed and help me” (Ps. 69: 1 (in KJB we have: Ps. 70: 1)). And He Who has appointed to all the things their image, He is the God of all the things. This is for He not only has brought all the things to existence out of nothing, but He also gave to each thing its image. And the Only Begotten Son and the Word, by descending from heavens and by embodying on Himself, He taught us these three kinds of prayers. He extolled the Fathers by saying: “I have extolled You on earth” (Jn. 17: 5); he thanked Him saying: “I thank You, Father, for You have heard Me” (Jn. 11: 41); and He asked like this: “I am praying for them... You Holy Father guard them in Your name” (Jn. 17: 12). And the word that “the prayer is that gladness raisin up thanks” the saint might have taken in from: “I am saying you these things for you to have My consummate joy within you” (Jn. 17: 18).

of his asks will be answered more quickly? Those ones which one cannot be saved without.

And in some circumstances, He removes and banished the heat of the enemy from the man, while in others He allows the man to be tempted, in order this temptation to become to the man cause for getting closer to God, as I said before. And for the man to learn as well and to gain experience in temptations. Thus says the Scripture's word: "The Lord allowed many peoples and He didn't destroy them and He didn't surrender them in the hands of Joshua, son of Navi, in order Him to tempt the sons of Israel through them, and the minds of the sons of Israel to be advised and they to learn the war" (Jud. 3: 102). This is because that righteous who do not know his weakness, he stays as on the knife edge, and he never is far from falling, nor from the killer lion, namely from the devil of the pride. And he who doesn't know his weakness he is lacking the humbleness. And he who lacks the humbleness he is also lacking the consummation. This is because of not being his city founded on iron pillars and his city is not surrounded by brass circles, namely it isn't founded on humbleness. And one cannot achieve humbleness except through those ways of the humbleness, which the heart becomes humble through and which are destroyed through the thoughts of the self-appreciation. That's why the enemy often finds cause to deviate the man. This is because without humbleness the man's thing cannot be done. And there hasn't been put on the letter of his liberation the sela of the Ghost<sup>122</sup>, but he rather still is a servant; and his thing is done because of fear. This is for one doesn't straighten his thing without humbleness and no one learn except out of trials. And without trial no one knows the humbleness.

That's why the Lord brings upon the saints causes for humbleness and for heart-crushing and for pained prayer, in order they who love Him to come closer to Him. And often He frightens them with the passions of the nature and with the slidings in ugly and filthy thoughts. And on occasions, with illnesses and with bodily helplessness; and on some other times, with poverty, with the lack of the utterly needed things.

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<sup>122</sup> This is a beautiful saying. A freedom that is not sealed through the Ghost it will serve the arbitrariness and it won't be the freedom of the Ghost's communion with God and with the fellow humans; it won't be that freedom free of the narrowing of the egotism.

And sometimes, with the pains of a dreadful fear and with the forsaking and with the shown war of the devil, which he uses to scare them with. And on some other times, though diverse fearsome things. And all of these happen to them in order they not to fall into the sleep of the idleness, or because of some things which he who lives in asceticism is weak towards, or for waking up the fear of the future realities.

Therefore, the trials are absolutely useful to the people. I am not saying that the man should willingly get drowsy through the ugly thoughts, in order their memory to become to him a cause for humbleness, neither I say the man should strive in other trials; what I am saying is that, while working the good, he must take vigil all the time and he must guard his soul and to think that he is created and because of that, he can easily fall. This is because each of us, because of being created, we need the power of God to help us. And everyone who needs someone's help presents a natural weakness. And everyone who knows his weakness he will necessarily pray for reaching to be humble, so that he will accomplish his need through him who can help him. This is because if he knew and if he saw his helplessness at the beginning, he wouldn't be lazy. If he wasn't lazy, he would not sleep and he would not be surrendered in the hands of those who torment him, in order they to wake him up.

Therefore, it is appropriate to him who walks the path to God to give thanks to God for all the things coming upon him and to blame and to reproach his own soul, and he must know that he would not be forsaken by the Care-Taker if he was not lazy; he has been forsaken in order his cogitation to wake up; he was forsaken for he was proud and in order him not to get crazy because of that, neither him to leave the battle stadium, neither him to fight without self-blaming; and in order not to get his evil be twofold because of that. This is for there is no injustice to God out of Whom springs the justice. God forbid that! His be the glory forever! Amen.



## Word XXII

### **About the Kinds of the Hope in God. And which Things Must Be Hopes from God. And Who Is Him Who Hopes Foolishly and Unwisely**

There is a hope in God born through faith out of heart. This is the good hope and with right-reckoning and into knowledge. And there is another, a liar one, that is born out of lawlessness. He hopes rightly and wisely into the Lord, he who isn't at all caught into the worry for the perishing things, but he is bestowed, day and night, entirely to God, not worrying about any worldly thing due to his much-occupation with the virtues, and the whole his preoccupation is directed towards the godlike things and that's why he doesn't care to prepare his food and his clothes and to adorn the place of the dwelling of his body and of all other things. This is for the Lord will prepare him the things he needs. This truly is that true and all-wise hope.

It is right that one like this one to hope in God, for he has made on himself God's servant and for he perseveres zealously in God's thing, without any laziness coming to him because of some reason. And it is right that God to show His care to one like this one in a special manner. This is for he observed God's commandment, that says: "Search, firstly, for the Kingdom of God and for His justice, and all these things will be added to you" (Mt. 7: 33); and "No not worry about your body" (Rom. 13: 14).

When we behave like this, the world prepares everything for us as it would be a servant to us, and it obeys our words, unhesitatingly, as to a master, and it doesn't resist our will<sup>123</sup>. And one like this won't stop to ceaselessly stay before God, and he won't surrender on himself to the need of his body. And he takes care of nothing except of stopping on himself, for the fear of God, from any unimportant or important worry which he tends through to pleasure, and which urge him to scattering. He will be given the necessary things in a wonderful manner,

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<sup>123</sup> The world obeys our words because our words are equally numerous conscious rationalities applied by will to the unconscious and without-own-will-or-choice rationalities of the world. Our being is elevated by these applied rationalities, through consciously choosing, above the nature and that's why our being won't be called to obey the death, or the total decomposition which are taken to, through its rationalities lacking the free choice, the nature's units. The man has a different destiny, one superior to the nature.

without him worrying or taking care of them and without him making any effort for them.

But him who has his heart totally sunk into the earthly things, and who always eats dirt together with the snake, and who doesn't care at all of the things which are pleasant to God, but he toils for all the bodily things and he is detached and empty of any virtue, because of the ceaseless meetings and because of the scattering due to pride, by searching for others and others occasions for that, he truly is fallen from good because of this carelessness and non-working. You say that him, on occasions, when he is in need for something, or tormented by some fruit of his lawlessness, such a man says too: "I hope in God and He will get me rid of worry and He will give me alleviation"? I tell him: You fool, until this moment you haven't been remembering God, but You have been cursing Him through the wickedness of your deeds and "His name was blasphemed because of you among Gentiles as it was written" (Rom. 2: 24), and now you dare to say with the whole your mouth: "I hope in Him and He will help me and He will take care of me"? Towards some like these ones God said through the prophet, shaming them up: "From day to day they search for Me and they want to learn My ways; as one who did the justice and the right things of their God they didn't deserted, they ask form me judgment and justice" (Isa. 58: 2).

As one like these ones is this fool who, by not coming close to God even with his thought, when enveloped by troubles he raises his hands, with trust, towards God. One like this must often be burnt with the hot iron, in order him to learn from one and from another. This is for he hasn't done anything worthy of hoping in God. But for his deeds and for his carelessness of the due things, he has made on himself worthy of punishment. But the long-suffering God, for His mercy, He suffers him too. Therefore, let not such a man deceive on himself and to forget about his behavior and to say that he hopes in God, because he will be punished. This is for he hasn't enriched on himself at all with the deeds of the faith. Let him not stretch his feet lazily, and say: "I believe that God will bestow me the good things, as one who have been living into the things of God"; or to insanely throw on himself into the well by not thinking at God at all. Let him not say after he has fallen: "I hope in God and God till escape me". Do not delude on yourself, you fool! The hope in God must be preceded by the toil for God

and by the sweat in His thing. If you believe in God, you are right, but your faith needs deeds and the hope in God is shown in heavy sufferings for virtue. Do you believe that God takes care of all His creatures and that he is powerful in all things? Then let your faith to be followed the due work and then God will hear you. Do not try to grab the wind with your fist, namely to have a faith without deeds.

Often, somebody crosses, without knowing it, s path endangered by a wild beast, or by some thieves, or by something similar. Thei usual taking of care of God it is shown in the fact that He escapes the traveler from such a perdition, or God impedes him from leaving for that journey by bringing him some impediments, until that wild beast will cross away from there, or God brings somebody in his way and that one turns him back. Again, sometimes there is a venomous snake in the middle of the road without being seen, And for God doesn't want to surrender the man to that trial, God makes that snake to suddenly whistle and to leave, or to move and the man sees the snake and escaped from being bitten, despite that man was unworthy because of his unshown sins known only to God. But God saves him for His mercy. And again, sometimes happens that a house collapses, or a wall, or a stone falls and rolls down noisily, and there happen to be some people. But God commands to the angel, with His love for people, to hold those not to fall until the people leave from there are cross through there, or God makes them leave for some reasons, so that there do not remain anyone under. But immediately that those people left, He allows those things to collapse or to fall. And if it happens somebody to be caught under those, God makes him escape unharmed. By this God wants to show the infinite greatness of His power.

These things, and similar things, are committed by the general-taking-care, of God. And the righteous has God's taking-of-care unseparated from him. This is for to the other people God commanded with right-reckoning they to administrate themselves their business and they to mix their knowledge with the taking-of-care of God. But the righteous doesn't need to administrate himself his things with this knowledge<sup>124</sup>. For he has achieve instead of this knowledge the

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<sup>124</sup> It is worthy to be noticed this discernment operated by Saint Issac between the own administration done by him who isn't totally surrendered to God, and that administration

faith, by which he “tears down all the heights rising against the knowledge of God” (2 Cor. 10: 5). And he doesn’t fear anything from among the mentioned things, for it has been written that “the righteous is confident like a lion” (Prov. 28: 1), daring towards anything by faith, and not like one who tempts God but like one who sees God, as one who has been armed with the power of the Holy Ghost. And for his care is ceaselessly at God, God says about him: “I am in trouble with him, I will deliver him and I will glorify him and I will fill him up with length of his days and I will show him My salvation” (Ps. 90: 15-16<sup>125</sup>). So, he who is drowsy and careless in his thing, he cannot have this hope. But this hope is had by him who always perseveres into God in all his things and he comes close to God by the kindness of his deeds and he ceaselessly aims the sight of his heart towards God’s grace, as the godlike David said: “My eyes weakened, hoping towards my God” (Ps. 68: 4<sup>126</sup>). For Him is due the glory, the honor, and the worshipping forever. Amen.

### **Word XXIII**

#### **About the Love of God, about Rejection, and about that Resting into Him**

That soul that loves God has earned his resting into God and only into God. You firstly undo all your ties to the exterior things and then you will be able to tie your heart to

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exclusively bestowed by God, to him who is totally surrendered to God. he who administrates his things by himself, he uses a knowledge he has earned on the basis of his natural aspiration to the knowledge sown in him by God. But he is helped by the taking-of-care of God. The righteous is defended and guided exclusively by God’s taking-of-care. But neither the righteous stays passively in front of God, but he too works thus to receive within him the care-taking power of God. The analyze of this theme and of the theme of the humbleness are among the especially remarkable in the *Words* of Saint Isaac.

<sup>125</sup> In KJB we have: Ps. 91: 15-16: “He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. // With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.”; in ROB we have: Ps. 90: 15-16: “He will shout out towards Me and I will hear him; I am together with him in trouble and I will get him out of it and I will glorify him. // I will fill him up with the length of his days, and I will show him My salvation.” (E. l. t.’s n.)

<sup>126</sup> In KJB we have: Ps. 69: 3: “I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.”; in ROB we have: Ps. 68: 4: “I got tired of shouting out, my throat got numbed, my eyes weakened hoping towards my God.” (E. l. t.’s n.)

God. This is for the attachment to God is preceded by the detachment from the world. The little child is nourished with bread after being weaned up. And that man who wants to broaden on himself into the godlike things, he must firstly estrange on himself from the world, like the little child from his mother's arms and breasts. This is for the bodily work preceded the soul work, as the dust preceded the soul instilled to Adam. He who hasn't achieve yet the bodily work he won't be able to have the souly work either. For the last one is born out of the first one, as the wheat ear from the simple grain of wheat. And he who doesn't have the souly work, he will miss the spiritual gifts (charismas).

The toils for truth from the present life do not match the delectation prepared to them who heavily suffer for the good things. As they who sow with tears are waited for by the sheafs of gladness, likewise the joy follows to the heavy suffering for God. That bread earned with sweat tastes sweet to the plowman and the deeds for righteousness taste sweet to that heart that receives the knowledge of Christ. You endure the contempt and the humiliation with a gentle will, in order you to have daring to God. That man that endures any harsh word into knowledge, without that word be preceded by a lawlessness committed by that man, that man will place on that moment a thorns crown on his head, but he is happy for at a time unknown to him he will be crowned with the incorruptibility.

He who runs away, into knowledge, from the vain-glory, he will feel within his soul the age to come<sup>127</sup>. He who says: I left the world, but he still fights the people for a certain need of his, in order nothing to be missing among the things which rest him, he is totally blind. This is for he willingly has deserted the entire body, but he still wages war and fight for one of its limbs. The mind of him who runs away from the peaceful life of the present era, it looks at the age to come. And he who is tied to the love for earning, he is slave to the passions. Do not reckon that only amassing gold and silver means love for earning, but anything which your will depends on. Do not praise him who torments his body but who has his senses untied, meaning his

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<sup>127</sup> Saint Issaac uses, usually, for the living with the soul of the godlike realities, present or future, the word "feeling". But this "feeling" isn't a simple sentiment, but it is a perception, an unmediated touch of them, like we perceive or like we touch with our senses the external realities. This fact will be accentuated especially by Saint Simeon the New Theologian.

earing and his mouth open an unrestrained and his eyes wandering. When you lay down borders to your soul, in order you to benefit through mercy, you accustom your soul not to search for justice in other things, so that you not to be gathering with one hand and wasting with another. This is for in the first thing one needs supervision, and in the second thing one need the broadness of his heart. You know that forgiving the sins to them who have mistaken belong to the deeds of the righteousness<sup>128</sup>. Then you will see the peace shining from all quarters within your mind. When you will be elevated above the way of the justice, you will be free in all things<sup>129</sup>.

Someone among the saints, while speaking about this, he said that if the merciful is not just too, he will be blind. I understand by that that he must give to somebody else some of the things he earned by his toils, but not out of the things he gained by lying, by committing injustice, or by other evil craftsmanships. This is for the same saint said again, in another place: "If you want to sow within the poor, sow out of your things; and if you want to sow out of things belonging to others, be aware that what you are sowing thus it will be more bitter than the tares". And I am saying that, if the merciful doesn't raise above his mercifulness, he actually won't be merciful. This means that he must not only give alms to the people out of his things, but he also must joyfully endure the injustice from other people, even if he has given them alms and he has had mercy on them. This is for, when he overcomes the justice by mercy, then he will be crowned not only with the crowns of the righteous of the law, but with the crown of the consummate ones from the Gospel. This is for giving to the poor out of his things and clothing up the naked and love his neighbor as on himself, and not doing injustice, and not lying,

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<sup>128</sup> In justice it is needed the mercy, in mercy it is needed the justice. There is no strict border between them. So must be understood the words: "When to lay down borders to your soul (the restraining of your life), in order you to benefit (to be saved) through mercy, you accustom your soul not to search for justice in other things", namely do not let yourself to behave as guided by a rigid justice towards people; you must not be, for instance, unforgiving with their mistakes. "In mercy it is needed supervision", namely let not be your gift a wasting caring not about the real needs of others; and the second thing, namely the righteous judgment, you use the broadness of your heart.

<sup>129</sup> You won't be mastered even by the way of the justice. You will be led only by love, that, despite to him who doesn't have it yet it is a law too, to him who has it the love is above any law. It is the consummation of the surpassing of all the laws, or of all the godlike commandments.

all of these were commanded also by the old law. But the consummation of the *oikonomia* of the Gospels commands us like this Him who take away your things, do not ask him to give those back to you, and you give to anyone who asks. And one even must joyfully endure not only the injustice regarding the things and the exterior aspects, but he must even put his own soul, for his brother. This is for this one is him who have mercy on his brother and not him who gives him some alms. This means that he is the one truly giving alms who, by hearing or seeing that something saddens his brother up, he will burn in his heart. So is him, who has been hit by his brother by he won't answer likewise, without feeling shame for that, and who neither will get upset in his heart<sup>130</sup>.

Honor the work of the vigil, in order you to find the comforting coming closer to your soul. Persevere reading in silence, in order your mind to be guided always towards the wonderful things of God. Love the poverty into patience, in order your mind to be gathered up from scattering. Hate the scattering in order you to guard your thoughts undisturbed. Gather up on yourself from the many things and take care only of your soul, in order you to save your soul from scattering, in the deepest peace. Love the righteousness, in order you not to be ashamed during your prayer before God<sup>131</sup>. Achieve the cleanness in your deeds and be the joy ignited into your thought by the remembrance of your death. Guard the insignificant things in order you not to fall into big mistakes. Do not get bored by your work in order you not to be ashamed while amid your companions. Do not be without victuals, lest they leave you at the half of the road. Fulfill your things into knowledge, in order you not to lose your road<sup>132</sup>. Achieve freedom in your living, in order you to be set free of worries<sup>133</sup>. Do not bond your freedom due to causes of delectation, in order

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<sup>130</sup> He doesn't not have mercy on his fellow human by giving him something from his external things, but he who gives him his soul, his love. This one truly comforts that one and heals his suffering caused by the conscience of his loneliness.

<sup>131</sup> He who hasn't guarded his virginity, he will often be troubled during his prayer by the memories of his sins and he will be ashamed before God.

<sup>132</sup> If you fulfill your ascetic toils without keeping your actual thought at God, it is like you would work automatically. In such a case you won't soully advance. The road you travel is external and it is like you wouldn't travel it.

<sup>133</sup> Freedom is only there where it is freedom from the burdening caused by the tendency towards pleasures, towards egotistic needs, namely there where it is the freedom even from oneself.

you not to become their slave. Love the baggy clothes, in order you to despise the thoughts occurring within yourself, namely the pride of your heart. This is because him who loves the luxury won't be able to achieve humble thoughts. This is because the heart is imprinted within by the exterior countenance.

Who is the lover of much-speaking who can achieve a clean cogitation while loving the much-speaking? Who is that hunter of vain-glory from people who can achieve humble thoughts? Or who is that debauched having his soil poured into his senses who can become clean in his cogitation and humble in his heart? When the mind is attracted by senses it will eat the food of the beasts. And when the senses are attracted by mind, they will be shared the food of the angels<sup>134</sup>.

To the humble cogitation it follows the gathering into oneself (the withdrawal). And the vain-glory is the servant of the fornication and it is the deed of the pride. The humble cogitation, by its ceaseless restraint, it will reach the sight (the contemplation) and it will adorn the soul too with the righteousness. And the vain-glory, because of the ceaseless disturbance and because of the mixing of the thoughts, it gathers dirty treasures out of the encounter with the things and it defiles the heart. And itself looks at the nature of the things with an unrestraint look and it pushes the mind to ugly hallucinations. But the humble cogitation restrains on itself through the spiritual look and it moves him who have achieve it towards God.

Do not liken they who do signs and unusual things and powers within world, to them who appease on themselves into knowledge. Love the work of the quietude more than the satiation of them who are in the world and more than the turning on many nations to worshipping God. This is for it will be better to you to be untied from the tie of the sin than to liberate a slave from slavery. It will be better to you to reconcile on yourself by uniting into a though the trinity from within you, namely your body, your soul, and your ghost, than to reconcile through your teaching the separated ones. This is for Gregory the Theologian says that is good to theologize for God, but it is

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<sup>134</sup> This is a way of transfiguring the body, of spiritualizing the senses.



even better to clean yourself to God<sup>135</sup>. It will be better to you to be unskilled to speaking than knower and skilled in overpouring the teaching as a river, with the sharpness of your mind. It will be more useful to you to take care of resurrecting your fallen soul from passions, through the motion of the thoughts given you by God, than you to resurrect the dead.

Many committed powers, they resurrected dead people, they toiled to turn back the strayed ones, and they did great things, and many were guided through their hands (in another manuscript: They lips, *t. n.*) towards the knowledge of God. And after they did that, they who resurrected dead people, they fell into defiled and filthy passions and they committed suicide and they were offence to many by their seen deeds. Because they still were ill in their souls and they didn't take care of their own health, but they surrendered on themselves to the sea of this world in order to heal the souls of those ones while themselves were still sick, and their souls lost their hope in God, as I said. This was because the weakness of their senses was unable to withstand the encounter with the flame of the things<sup>136</sup>. This was because they had to, for instance, to guard on themselves not to see women, not to rest, not to earn money and material things, and not to master over others and not to raise above others.

It will be better you if they suspect you of stupidity, as not being able to resist in word because of the fewness of your education, than to be reckoned among the wisemen for your cheeky daring. Be poor for the sake of the humbleness, and not rich so that to be cheeky. Prove with the strength of your virtues on them who dogmatize against you than by the seeming conviction power of your words. Shut your mouth up and bring to silence the cheekiness of the disobedient with your gentleness and with the peace of your lips. Shame up the fornicators with the decency of our living and shame up them who are shameless in their senses, through the restraint of your looks.

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<sup>135</sup> Properly-said, that one knows God within himself, by experiencing God's work, he who is cleaned up of worldly thoughts which narrow his mind and steal his peace from him.

<sup>136</sup> The whole phrase is: "Because the weakness of their senses was unable to withstand the flame of the things, *which uses to weaken the strength of the passions and to resist the passions.*" We have chosen to translate *by omissions* the part in Italics, because it seems to us as exactly the opposite. (E. l. t.'s n.)

You reckon on yourself as a stranger, wherever you reach at, in order you to be delivered from the harm coming to your out of daring. Reckon on yourself, all the time, as not knowing anything, in order you to get rid of that defamation coming to you out of others' suspicion on you that you would argue a different opinion. Persevere in always blessing with your mouth and you won't be reproached. This is for the reproach gives birth to reproach and the blessing gives birth to blessing. Reckon on yourself, everywhere, as lacking any education, and you will be reckoned as wise for the whole your life. Do not teach somebody what you haven't understood and what yourself haven't done yet, in order you not to be shamed up and to be unveiled, by comparison to your behavior, your lie. But if you say to somebody something necessary, you will speak as one who wants to learn himself, and not authoritatively and daringly. And go ahead and judge on yourself and show that you are inferior to another, in order you to show the image of the humbleness them who listen to you, and to conquer them by determining them to listen to your words and them to start working; and thus, you will be honored by them. And if you can, speak about these things with tears, in order to benefit both you and them who listen to you, and the grace of God to be with you.

If you have received the gift from God and if you have been found worthy of being delighted with the contemplation of the judgments of God and of the seen creatures, that is the first step of the knowledge, prepare on yourself and arm on yourself against the ghost of the blasphemy. Do not stay in this land without weapons, in order you not to be quickly killed by them who set traps against you and who delude you. And your weapons will be your tears and your consummate fasting. Guard yourself against reading the dogmas of the heretics. This is because that reading arms up the most the blasphemy's ghost. And do not start shamelessly examining the godlike things and teachings with a full belly, or you will repent of doing that. Take heed at what I am telling you: in the full belly there is no knowledge about God. read continuously and insatiably the books of the teachers about the care-taking from God. This is for these books guide your mind in order your mind to see the order of the creatures of God and of God's things and these readings will prepare your mind for achieving luminous meanings out of their subtlety, and they will make your mind

travelling with cleanness towards understanding the creatures of God. Read also the Gospels bestowed us by God in order they to be known by the entire world, in order you to take victuals out of the power of His Providence shown to each generation, and your mind will dive into the wonderful realities of God<sup>137</sup>. Such a reading will be helpful to your soul. But read when you have peace from anyone and during reading be free of the much-worry for your body and from the disturbance from the material things, in order your soul to be shared with the sweetest tasting of the godlike realities, through that sweet understanding that is above all feeling, so that your soul will feel those realities during while occupying on yourself with them<sup>138</sup>. Do not reckon the words of the experienced as of those who falsify and sell the godlike words, lest you will remain in darkness until the end of your life and you will miss their use and you will be troubled and lacking the limpidness during war and you will fall into that seeming-good pit.

And you will have as sign of the things which you want to enter, in order not to get out of that place: When the grace starts opening your eyes in order you to truly feel the sight of the things, your eyes will immediately start shedding tears, so that those tears often wash up your cheek with their abundance. Then the war from the senses gets appeased and your heart will gather inside<sup>139</sup>. If somebody teaches you against these ones, you won't believe him. This is because you must not search for another proven sign of your body, besides your tears. But when your mind is elevated from creatures, then your body too will get out of tears and out of any movement and work of your senses.

"When you find honey, eat with temperance, lest by getting satiated you will vomit it" (Prov. 25: 16). The soul's nature is a nimble and light thing. Sometimes the soul jumps

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<sup>137</sup> From Scriptures we learn how to know the world too, for the same God has created it too, and God teaches us through His supra-natural revelation how can we be saved within it, and how can we see the world as transparent to God and as a word of His. Still, if we are preoccupied with the care for the world and for the things from within the world as ultimate reality, that will impede us from being saved. The supra-natural Revelation presents us the world as transparent to God, as a word of God, as a gift from God, and as a road towards God.

<sup>138</sup> The reality of God is tasted, felt, and understood in the same time. So followed to tell Saint Simeon of the New Theologian. But this is an understanding differing from that purely intellectual understanding that takes place from distance.

<sup>139</sup> When the spiritual feeling is very strong due to seeing the godlike realities, the bodily senses will get appeased, for they will be overwhelmed by the spiritual feeling.

and wants to ascend above himself and to find out things above his nature. And the soul often understands something from the reading of the Scriptures and out of contemplating (understanding, seeing) the things. But when the soul is allowed to liken himself to those understood by him, the soul will find on himself inferior, according to the measure of his oikonomia, by understanding which things his knowledge entered at. That's why the soul's thoughts will be filled up with fear and with tremble and the soul will hurry up to turn back, because of fear, to his lowered state, because of reckoning that he has dared to raise to things above his understanding. This is because of the fears of these things there will occur within the soul a fear and the right-reckoning (the discernment) will urge his mind to embrace the silence and not to allow be himself tempted by daring, in order the soul not to be lost and to search for unreachable things and not to inquire the realities which are superior to him.

Therefore, when you are given the power for understanding, you may understand; but to not grab the mysteries shamelessly, but you bow down and extoll God and thank Him in silence. This is because, as it is not good to eat too much honey, likewise, it won't be good to inquire too much the godlike words, lest, by wanting to look at greater things while we still cannot understand them yet, out seeing power to weaken and to be harmed because of the harshness of the way towards them. This is because sometimes, instead of truth, one sees hallucinations. And when the mind gets tired because of searching it forgets about the darkness that is in. So, the wise Solomon said that "the impatient man is like a city without walls" (Prov. 25: 28). So, man, clean up your soul and banish away the care for the things which are outside your nature and you hang before the meanings and the understanding movements the curtain of your righteousness and of your humbleness, and through them you will find Him Who is inside your nature. This is for the mysteries are unveiled to them who are humble in thought<sup>140</sup>.

If you want to give to your soul the work of the prayer that cleans up your mind<sup>141</sup>, and if you want to give to your soul the perseverance into the night vigil, in order you to

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<sup>140</sup> The humbleness is penetration within the unadorned inward realities. And there is God.

<sup>141</sup> The true prayer cleans the mind up of any thought that is not thinking at God.

achieve a luminous cogitation, you get far from the sight of the world and you cut off the meetings; and do not get accustomed to receive friends within your monastic cell, not even for kindness, but only on those who are like you and who think like you and who have the same mysterious understanding as you have. Fear the wallowing into spiritual dialogues<sup>142</sup>, which usually are unwillingly stirred up. And after you have cut off and after you have undone and after you have totally stopped the external dialogue, you will unite your prayer with the mercy and your soul will see the light of the truth. This is for, as much as the heart is getting appeased of the external things, as much the mind will be able to receive, by understanding the meanings, the content of the godlike works and the kidnapping by them. This is because of being the soul's habit to change a meeting for another, if we strive to manifest a little care<sup>143</sup>. Occupy on yourself with the reading of the Scriptures and that will show you the way of the subtle contemplation (of the understanding), and read the lives of the saints even if you do not feel their sweetness since the beginning because you still are closet to the things which bring darkness. due to the closeness. And you do this in order to change a meeting for another<sup>144</sup>.

And when you get up for your prayer and for your rule, instead of cogitating at the worldly realities seen and heard by you, you will think at the godlike Scriptures which you have read. And thus, your mind will come to cleanness. And this is what it was written<sup>145</sup>, that the soul is helped by reading when staying at prayer. And again, the prayer brings light into reading<sup>146</sup>. And again, instead of the mixing with the worldly things, it will bring content to the kinds of the prayer, so that out of reading the soul will be lightened at prayer, in order the soul always to pray unhesitatingly and undisturbed.

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<sup>142</sup> The souly realities are inferior to the spiritual realities. The souly things are the purely human realities which are not crossed through by the Godlike Ghost, and which are not preoccupied with God.

<sup>143</sup> If you take away from your soul the preoccupation with the souly things, because the soul must occupy on himself with something, the soul will occupy on himself with the spiritual realities.

<sup>144</sup> It is about changing the meeting with the material things for the meeting with the godlike reality, namely to looking at the things into God by contemplating their godlike rationalities.

<sup>145</sup> In the writings of the godlike Fathers.

<sup>146</sup> In prayer you meet God Who lightens Himself the things He unveils. Then the prayer will remove other thoughts, so that you will be able to focus on what you will read.

Ugly thing is to them who are in love with their body and with their belly to speak about the spiritual realities; that would be like a debauched speaks about virginity. When your body is very ill, it rejects the fat foods and it is disgusted by them; likewise, that mind occupied with the worldly things cannot come closer and study the godlike realities. The fire doesn't start in wet woods, and the godlike warmth doesn't ignite in that heart that loves resting. The debauched doesn't persevere in love for only one partner, and that soul that is tied to many things won't remain within the godlike teachings. As he who doesn't see the sun with his eyes, he won't be able to describe the sun by hearing, neither will he feel the sunlight, likewise, he who hasn't tasted with his soul the sweetness of the spiritual realities.

If you have a little more than your daily need requires, share that to the poor and then come and bring your prayer daringly. Namely you talk to God as the son to his father<sup>147</sup>. Nothing can get your heart so close to God as the giving of alms. Nothing can sow so much peace within your mind as the willing poverty<sup>148</sup>. It is better for you to be called as stupid by the many, because of your simplicity, and not to be called by them as wise and having a consummate mind, because of your glory. If one mounted on a horse stretches his head towards you in order to receive alms, you won't refuse him. This is because, surely, at that time he is in need as one of the poor. And when you give, give with a wide heart and with a glad face; and give more than you are asked to. "Send, he says, your bread towards the face of the poor and after a short time you will find reward" (Prov. 11: 1). Do not discern between rich and poor and do not attempt to discern between worthy and unworthy, but all the people to be equally good to you. This is for thus you will be able to attract to good also the unworthy. This is for the soul is quickly attracted from the bodily things to the fear of God. And the Lord sat at the table together with the publicans and with the debauched, and He didn't discern the unworthy, in order Him to attract thus everyone to the fear of God; and through the bodily things, to bring them close to the spiritual realities. For

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<sup>147</sup> That heart that is tied by parsimony to the material things it won't be able to meet God. Only him who has opened his heart to another will be able to open his heart to God as well.

<sup>148</sup> The willing poverty is the untying of any thought referring to the things which limit. Then the mind can gather into the endless God, by coming back itself to its indefinite state.

that, you will reckon all the people as equals in good and in honor, even if there would be a Jew, or an ungodly, or a suicidal, especially for he is your brother and he is of the same nature with you, and he was strayed, without science, from truth.

And when you do the good, do not expect consequently to that a reward, and you will be rewarded by God for both these two things<sup>149</sup>. And if it is possible to you, do not do the good even expecting the future reward. If you set to your soul the law of the poverty and by the grace of God you have been liberated from worries and you have been elevated above the world into your poverty<sup>150</sup>, take heed lest for your love for people you will love the richness in order you to give, allegedly, alms, and thus you to throw your soul into the disturbance of taking from one and giving to another. By that you will lose your honor<sup>151</sup>, by obeying the need for asking from people and you will fall off your freedom and off the height of your cogitation, down into the life's worries. This is for your step is higher than that of them who give alms. I beg you not to obey on yourself to these worries. The giving-of-alms is like the baby food. And the quietude is the peak of the consummation. If you have wealth, you must scatter it at once. And if you do not have wealth, you must not try to gather one. Clean your monastic cell of things bringing you delectation or which are redundant. This is for, if you do this, it will take you unwillingly to restraint. This is for the fewness of the material things teaches the man the restraint. But when we are covered from the side of the things, we won't be able to abstain.

They who are victorious in the exterior war, they will gain daring towards the fear from within and they will no longer be dominated by any necessity. And they do not wobble either in

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<sup>149</sup> For both the facts that you give alms and you do not expect a reward for that.

<sup>150</sup> A paradox: he who willingly have nothing, he will no longer be the slave of the world, but he will be above the world.

<sup>151</sup> Here it is not about the worldly honor, but it is about the height of the virtue, it is about the step of the consummation, which have been elevated to, them who live in poverty and in quietude, liberated from the narrowness caused by the measure of the things. This is for he says further on: "for your step is higher than the step of the giving-of-alms". This is for the apostles too they preferred the preaching of the world to serving at the tables... So, this father too, he places the poverty and the quietude above the taking from one and giving to another, though this one too is a worthy of respect deed, and it is a deed pleasant to God.

the war from in front of them or in the war from behind them<sup>152</sup>. And I call as exterior war that one stirred up by senses and by laziness against our soul, as for instance from that urge to give and to receive by hearing and by tongue<sup>153</sup>. These ones by being brought within our soul, they will sow within our soul a blindness, and because of the external disturbance our would will no longer be able to take heed at himself during the hidden war stirred up against him, and therefore the soul won't be able to defeat by silence on those from within who stir the soul up. But when somebody closes the city's gates, namely his senses, he will fight within and he won't fear them who plot outside the city.

Blesses is him who knows these things and who remains into silence, and who is not disturbed by the multitude of his deeds, but he transforms all his bodily deeds into the toil of the prayer<sup>154</sup> and he believes that as long as he works with God, he has the whole his care put on His behalf day and night. This is because he won't lack anything from the unavoidable need, given the fact that he restrains on himself for God, from what is unnecessary and from material things. But if one cannot persevere into quietude without some handwork, let him work using his work as a helper. But let him not work too much for the sake of the earning. This was appointed to the weaker ones. And to the consummate ones, this will be a disturbance. This is for the fathers ruled to the poor and tending to idleness ones that they must work, as it is an absolutely necessary thing to them, but the work hasn't been appointed to anyone as such.

During the time which God pricks your heart within, you will surrender on yourselves ceaselessly to the prostrations and to the kneelings and you won't allow your heart to worry about something, lets the devils will start persuading you to occupy on

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<sup>152</sup> "What are those wars from ahead and from behind? That war from in front of you is the manifest and full of daring war, and that war from behind is hidden and unnoticed".

<sup>153</sup> After he talked about that war stirred up by senses and in general, he has focused on himself only on hearing and speaking. This is for we both give and receive only through these ones. Through the other senses we only receive. Better said, we give only through our tongue, but we give as a reaction to what we receive through hearing. So, these two, the hearing and the speaking are especially connected to one another.

<sup>154</sup> One can understand this not only about the ceaseless prayer, but also about the need for uniting all his deeds with hid thought at God, transforming his deeds into prayer, that is toil because of the difficulty of keeping the thought focused on God. But the consummate ones, who can continuously keep their thought at God, they no longer have to work in order they to be urged by deeds to think at God.



yourselves with other things too. BY doing so, you will see and you will wonder what will be born within you out of those. There is no greater and more tiring and more envied by devils, during the struggles of the ascesis, than somebody to throw on himself before Christ's cross and he to pray day and night and he to tie his hands at his back<sup>155</sup>. Do you want your warmth not to get cold and you not to be deprived of your tears? You hold on these ones and you will be happy if you observe, day and night, the things said to you and if you do not search for something else. Then the sun will rise within you<sup>156</sup> and your righteousness will shine quickly and you will reach to be like a flourishes Paradise and as an inexhaustible water spring.

Take heed at what goods are born to the man out of fight. He often kneels in prayers and has his hands stretched upwards to the sky and he keeps his face focused on Christ's cross, and he gathers all his thoughts towards God, in prayer. And suddenly, while he prays to God with tears and with pricking of the heart, it starts moving within his heart a spring out of which is spread the delectation. And his limbs get soft and his eyes get cloudy and his face bows to the ground, and his thoughts get changed, so that he no longer is able to do prostrations because a joy resisting that and moving throughout all this body<sup>157</sup>. Take heed, man, at what you are reading. This is because if you do not toil in ascesis you won't find that. And if you do not knock on the door with warmth, and if you do not stand at the door ceaselessly, you won't be listened to.

Who, after hearing this, he will still desire the righteousness from outside<sup>158</sup>, except him who is unable to endure the quietude? Still, if one is unable to toil in the second one (for it is a grace from God to be the man inside the gate), let him not leave the other way, in order him not to be deprived of

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<sup>155</sup> In order him not to work anything.

<sup>156</sup> God shines like the sun within them who continuously pray, and He keeps their look focused on Him. It might be this where the hesychastic teaching was born from, about the seeing of the light while praying.

<sup>157</sup> That joy actually softens up the body and it warms the body up.

<sup>158</sup> "He calls as righteousness from outside that virtue with the deed. This is for he says further on: in order him not to be deprived of the two ways of the life. And the two ways of the life are: the contemplation, that is the natural and inwards work, and the doing, that is bodily and that does the pleasant to God deeds". The teacher of the first one is Mary, and the teacher of the second one is Martha. The Lord welcomes both of them, but the Lord cherishes more that one of Mary.

both ways of the life. Until the exterior man dies to all the world's things, not only towards the sin but also towards any other bodily work, likewise the inward man must die towards all the evil thoughts, and until the body's movement get weakened so that the sweetness of the sin will no longer be stirred up within his heart, the sweetness of the Ghost of God won't move within man and his limbs won't be cleanness up in his life and the godlike meanings won't enter his soul, neither will him feel those ones nor he will see (contemplate) them. And until the worry for the things of the live doesn't cease within his heart, except the care for the things absolutely necessary to the nature, and until he doesn't allow God to take care of those, there won't be born within him the spiritual drunkenness and he won't feel that insanity that was comforting the apostles<sup>159</sup>.

But I have said these not in order to cut off the hope of the others. This is for I am not saying that if somebody doesn't reach the peak of the consummation, he won't be found worthy to receive the gift from God, or that he won't be welcomed by any comforting. The truth is that, when somebody weakens his urge towards undue things, and if he totally stops on himself from those, and if he runs towards the good things, in a short time he will feel the help. And if he toils a little too, he will find comforting to his soul and he will earn the forgiveness of his sins, and he will be found worthy of grace and he will receive multitude of goods. Still, he will be smaller in comparison to the consummation of him who has separated on himself from the world and thus he has found within his soul the mystery of the happiness from there and he has understood why Christ descended to us. Him to be the glory, together with the Father and with the Holy Ghost, now and forever and ever! Amen.

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<sup>159</sup> "What is the insanity that was comforting the apostles?" It is not else but that of crucifying on themselves together with Christ and to no longer living into body, but into Christ, and into the faith in the Son of God, an insanity that is an ecstasy and it is reckoned, by them who live into body, as insanity. "This is for we are insane for Christ" (1 Cor. 4: 10). This insanity not only was comforting the Apostle and it made him rejoicing into sufferings, but it convinced him to reckon the death as a gain and way more precious than the life is: "This is for, to me live, he was saying, it is Christ, and dying it is interest" (Phil. 1: 22). (In KJB we have; Phil. 1: 22: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (E. l. t.'s n.))

## **Word XXIV**

### **About the Signs and the Fruits of the Love**

The love for God is an above-nature-warmth and when it comes within somebody without measure, it will make that soul to get out of himself (ecstatic). That's why, the heart of him who feels the love for God, it cannot comprise and endure it, but on the measure of the quality of the love coming out of him, it will be shown within him an unusual change.

And the felt signs are these ones: the man's face becomes as of fire and full of charm and his body gets warmed. The fear and the worry get far from him and he gets out of himself (he enters the ecstasy). That power that keeps his mind together it leaves him, and he becomes like one who is out of his minds. He reckons the fearsome death and a joy and the sight of his mind won't ever find an interruption in understanding the heavenly mysteries, and while not being present, he speaks as he is present, without being seen by somebody. His natural knowledge and sight stop, and he no longer feels his movement in a bodily manner, while moving among things. Even if he does something, he won't feel that at all, as one who has his mind elevated into sight. And it seems that his cogitation is always directed towards somebody else.

By this spiritual drunkenness were yore engulfed the apostles and the martyrs. The first ones walked throughout the whole world, toiling and being condemned. The others, with the limbs cut off, they shed their blood as water and by enduring the most dreadful torments they weren't discouraged, but they endured those torments mainly; and while they were wise, they were reckoned as insane. Other wandered through deserts, through mountains, in caves, and in the cracks of the earth and while missing a steadfast dwelling place, they were the most steadfastly settled down people. May God found us too worthy of achieving this insanity!

### **About humbleness**

If you see that you have achieved resting from passions, you won't believe to yourself before entering the city of the humbleness. This is because the enemy would be plotting you

some trap. So, after resting, you will wait for much disturbance and grief. This is because, if you do not cross through the settlements of the virtues, you won't find resting of your toil; and you won't have resting of them who plot against you, until you reach the city of the holy humbleness. God, by your grace, make us worthy to reach there! Amen.

### **Word XXV**

#### **About the Patience for the Love for God and about the Help We Find in It**

As much the world despises this world, and as much he strives into the fear of God, as much the taking-of-care of God will come closer to the man and the man will feel, in a hidden manner, its help, and the man will be given clean thoughts in order him to understand it. And as somebody deprives on himself of the world's goods, as much as he deprives on himself of those as much the mercy of God will come to him, and the God's love for people will bear him. Glory to Him Who saves us through the things from the right and through the things from the left<sup>160</sup> and by all of these He gives us occasion to find our true life! This is for them who get weak in gaining their life by will, He brings their soul towards virtue by unwilling troubles. Thus, the poor Lazarus was unwillingly deprived of the goods of this world, and he even had his body covered in wounds, so that he had two bitter sufferings, and each one of those was worse than another. Still, in the end, he was honored to be sent in Abraham's bosom. God is near to the heart of him who shouts out his trouble to Him. And if somebody is need of bodily things, or he is in a trouble (until through our patience that will become towards our help, as a physician who, by performing a surgery upon a grave disease, he will bring us health), the Lord will show in his soul His great love for people, according to the harshness of his pains and grief.

So, when the longing for the love for God hasn't over come within you to the extent that you have reached dispassionate in

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<sup>160</sup> God saves us both through virtues and sins, for through sins too He wakes us up to repentance; or both by gifts and by trials.

your trouble for that joy into Him<sup>161</sup>, you know that the world still lives within you more than Christ does. And when the illness and the need and the exhaustion of your body, or the fear of them who can harm your body, they disturb your thought getting it out of the joy for the hope into the Lord, you will know that inside you there still live your body and not Christ. And, simply speaking, that one whom your longing is stronger for, that one will live within you. And when you have no need and you are healthy and you do not fear the enemies and you say that you can cleanly walk into Christ, you will know that you are sick in your mind and you are lacking the tasting of the glory of God.

But I do not judge you because of being you like that, but, rather, I want you to know how much you still miss of consummation, despite you live to some extent according to the rule of the holy fathers who live before us. And do not say that there was no man whose cogitation to totally be raised out of weakness, when the body swims into temptations and troubles, and whose longing for Christ would have overcome the sadness of the thought. I am not going to mention here the holy martyrs, let's I won't be able to stand before the deep of their sufferings. I will keep my silence, therefore, how victorious the patience was within them, right out of the power of their love for Christ, over the much trouble and over the desire of their body. I will overlook those, because even by mentioning them it will scare the human nature off, disturbing it by their greatness and by the wonderful cogitation at those.

I will also keep my silence on the so-called ungodly philosophers. This is for one of them set as law of his cogitation to keep his silence for several years. And the Roman emperor wondered about that and he wanted to test the philosopher. So, the emperor ordered that one to be brought before him. And when the emperor saw the philosopher remaining silent to any question the emperor asked him, the emperor got mad and ordered the philosopher to be killed, because of not fearing his throne and crown. But the philosopher didn't get scared and he serenely prepared on himself to die. But the emperor ordered to

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<sup>161</sup> The absence of the pain into troubles, reached at its peak in martyrs, it is explained by the fact that the pain is overwhelmed by the joy produced by the love from Christ. O great joy can overwhelm the feeling of a pain into body. The strong faith which some ill people came near to Christ with, it helped them to be healed.

his guards: “if he gets scared of sword and so he transgresses his own law, you will kill him; but if he perseveres in his will, bring him back to me, alive”. While they were getting closer to the place for his killing, the servants tormented him to transgress his law and so to escape dying, but the philosopher thought: It is better to me to die instantly while keeping my law, which I strived so much for, than to allow to myself to be overwhelmed by the fear of death and to make my wisdom reproachable and to cowardly obey a commandment imposed me forcibly”. And the philosopher lied down serenely and waited for to be cut with the sword. And the emperor was announced about that and he wondered about it and he ashamed let the philosopher go.

Other consummately trampled on the nature’s lust. Others easily endured reproaches. Others persevered in grave ills without getting troubled. And others showed their strong patience in troubles and misfortunes<sup>162</sup>.

And if these ones, for a vain-glory and for a vain-hope endured those things, how much more we the monks - who are called to the partaking (communion) with God – must we endure? May us be found worthy of that through the prayers of the All-Holy our Master and Birth-Giver of God and forever Virgin Mary, and of all the ones who in the sweat of their ascesis were pleasant to Christ! This is for Him is due the glory, the honor, and the worshipping, together with His Father and together with the eternal and of-the-same-nature and of-life-beginner Ghost, now and forever and ever! Amen.

## Word XXVI

### **About the Ceaseless Fasting and about Tarrying in One Place. And about the Things Following to Those. And about the Fact that Their Exact Using Is Learnt out of the Knowledge with Right-Reckoning**

By being tempted for a long time into the things from the right side and into the things from the left side, and by often

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<sup>162</sup> Nicephorus Theotokis gives in notes to the Greek text divers names of philosophers and personalities from the Hellenic world who illustrates these virtues.

testing on myself in these two kinds of tests, and by receiving countless hits from my enemy and by being I secretly found worthy of great helps, I have earned experience for several years and I have learned, by testing and by the grace from God, these things:

That the foundation of all the goods and the liberation of the soul from the slavery to the enemy and the way leading to light and to life, it is composed of these two things: you to gather on yourself in a place and to always be fasting, namely to submit on yourself wisely and sapiently to the restraint of your belly, in a motionless sitting and in a ceaseless meditation and cogitation at God<sup>163</sup>. From here comes the submission of the thoughts, out of it comes the watchfulness of the mind. By this the wild beasts which move within body are tamed. This one brings the gentleness of the thoughts. Out of this are born the luminous moves of the cogitation. From here comes the striving for the deeds of the love. This causes high and subtle understandings. Out of this start the immeasurable tears everywhere, and the remembrance of the death. These bring the clean righteousness that restrains on itself from any hallucination that tempts the death. Out of this comes the penetrating and sharp sight and even the seeing of the things from far. From here come the meanings of the deep mysteries uncovered by the mind in the content of the godlike words and the more-internal moves which emerge within soul, and the gift for discerning the spiritual powers from the holy powers, and the true views from the vain-hallucinations. Then, the fear of the ways and of the paths form the mind's ocean<sup>164</sup>; namely the fear cuts off the carelessness and the idleness. After it, it will be born the flame of the zeal that overcomes any danger and any fear. Then, that warmth despising all the lusts and that erases any cogitation at the passing things, and it causes the forgetfulness, together with others<sup>165</sup>. And to say it shortly, out of these emerges the freedom of the true man and the joy of the

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<sup>163</sup> Even this father knew about motionlessly sitting in a chair and cogitating at God, or about the ceaseless prayer.

<sup>164</sup> The mind or the cogitation is a true moving ocean, which all sorts of big ways or of small paths can be opened in, some of them leading to the godlike realm, while others sinking into an abyss him who chooses them. That man who feels a true fear while choosing the true way out of the countless other ways, he proves to be a spiritually-advances man.

<sup>165</sup> Although the lust is itself mixed with the warmth, the superior warmth of the zeal for God it overwhelms the inferior warmth of the list for bodily or worldly things.

soul and that resurrection together with Christ into the Kingdom of Heavens<sup>166</sup>.

And if somebody disregards these two<sup>167</sup>, he will lose not only all the things mentioned before, but he will also shake the foundation of all the virtues by despising these two virtues. And as these will be the beginning and the end of the godlike work within soul, and they will be door and way to Christ, if somebody keeps them and he perseveres in them; but if he gets far from them and he parts with them, he will reach into the things opposite to them: I mean the bodily scattering, the shameless covetousness of the belly, which are the beginning of the opposite things mentioned before, and he will give room to the passions within his soul.

And the beginning of one of them it firstly unties the senses submitted to the restraint. And what will follow out of this? It will follow the inappropriate and unexpected meetings which are near to falling. Then will follow the disturbance of the strong waves waken up through the sight and through the sharp heat of the eyes that takes the body under its control and that makes easier the slidings taking place into thought. Then, there will occur uncontrolled thoughts hurrying up towards falling. After that, it will come the cooling down of the longing for the thing of God and the gradual weakening of the power for discerning the quietude from anything else and finally the total forsaking of the rule of his living. It will follow the renewal of the forgotten sins and the learning of other sins too which were unknown to him and which are continuously born within him by the unwilling views, of many sorts, which he comes across to by moving himself from a county to another and from place to place. Then the passions, which were killed from his soul by the grace of God and which were lost by forgetting the memories from the cogitation, they start moving again and to force the soul to work them. And in order I not to mention all the other ones, these ones are opened within him out of that prime cause, namely out of the scattering of the body and out of notwithstanding the narrowness of the quietude.

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<sup>166</sup> The peak one reaches through cleaning of passions it is the freedom of the soul of the passions' chains, of their burdens, and with this, the resurrection or the elevation above all the enslaving laws and powers. And in it the joy is full and eternally uninterrupted.

<sup>167</sup> The fasting or the restraint and the ceaseless cogitation at God. These two accompany on one another.



But what follows out of the another, namely out of starting to work the porky work? What else is the porky body except letting the belly without restrictions and always filling your belly up and not having an established time for the need of the body, as the speaking beings have? And what will be born out of this? From here comes the burdening of the head and the much wight of the body joined with the weakening of the shoulders. Then, the need for leaving the liturgy (the serving) of God. This is for it will occur a laziness of making prostrations during the liturgy a disregarding of the usual kneelings, a darkening and the straying of the cogitation; a thickened mind that cannot understand anything because of the disturbances and because of the many darkened thoughts; a thick and darkened mist stretched over the whole soul; much idleness in doing all the things of God, and even in reading, because that one doesn't taste the sweetness of the words of God; much non-work of the necessary things; an uncontrolled and scattered mind all over the earth; much wort gathered within all his limbs; unclean imaginings during night, caused by filthy hallucinations and by indecent images arising a lust that passes into the soul and it will accomplish its wills in an unclean manner.

And even the beddings of this miserable man and his clothes and his entire body will be defiled by the abundance of the dirty leaking that gushes out of him like from a spring. And this happens to him not only at night but also in daytime. This is for his body always leaks and it defiles his thought. By that he loses his virginity. This is for the sweetness of the tickle cause within the whole his body a continuous and insupportable heat. There occur within him deceiving thoughts imagining a beauty in front of him and which incite him continuously and which tickle his mind by the imagined dialogue. And he mates with those imaginings by occupying on himself with them, and by lusting them, because his discernment power has been darkened. And this is what the prophet said: "This is the rewards of the sister of Sodom, that, by delighting on itself, it ate bread to satiation"; and the others (Exod. 16: 49).

But this too was said about a certain wiseman: if somebody nourished his body with much delectation, he will cause war to his soul. And then, if he comes to his senses and starts striving to control on himself, he won't be able to,

because of the overwhelming heat of the movements of his body and because of the uncontrollable movements of his body and because of the uncontrollable force of the incitements and of the tickling which enslave his soul to their will. Can you see here the subtlety of these ungodly? And the same one says: "The delectation of the body with foods during the early youth that is full with wort it will make the passions to quickly enter the soul and they make the death engulf that soul". And thus, this one falls under the judgment of God.

But that soul that always lives thinking at the due things, that soul will rest in his freedom and his worries are small and that soul doesn't feel sorry for something, but it takes care of virtue, by restraining the passions, by guarding the virtue, and by working for growing the virtue. That soul has a worriless joy, a good life, and an unendangered shore. But the worldly pleasures not only that strengthen the passions and make them callous against the soul, but they also uproot the soul. And together with these ones, they ignite the belly towards unrestraint and towards the ultimate and borderless disorder of the unrestraint. And they will force him to satisfy, timely and untimely, his body's needs. This is because him who is dominated by these, he won't want to endure the slightest hunger, or to control on himself, because he is mastered by passions.

These are the fruits of the shame coming out of the covetousness of the body. And those ones form before these ones, are the fruit of the patience for living in one place and in quietude. That's why also the enemy, by knowing the times of fulfilling our natural needs, which the nature moves towards its need, and by knowing that our mind wanders because of the scattering of our eyes and because of the satiation of our belly, he will strive and fight to entice us to give to our nature more than it needs, and to sow within us the images of some evil thoughts during those times, and, if possible, to make the passions to overcome the nature by over-satiating it, and in order to sink the man into fallings. That's why, as the enemy know the time, at our turn we must know our weakness and the power of our nature; we must know that our nature is helpless to the impulses and moves from those times, and to the subtlety of the thoughts which are like a foam before our eyes and thus we cannot see on ourselves and to fight what is happening to us. Based on our long experience, consequently to

the temptations form our enemy and to the troubles we have often been enduring from him, let's be wise from now on, and let's not allow on ourselves to be pushed to fulfill our lust for delectation and to let ourselves be defeated by hunger, and so, even if we suffer the pain of the hunger or of the need, we will stand non-budged from the place of our appeasement, and we will avoid going there where easily happen such temptations to us, and neither will we give to ourselves occasions and reasons to leave the wilderness. This is because these ones are the plots of the enemy. And if you endure into wilderness, you won't be tempted. This is for you won't see women, neither something else that harms your living, nor will you hear indecent words.

"What is it to you and to the way to Egypt, that you drink the water of Ghion?" (Jer. 2: 18). Understand what I want to say to you. Show your enemy your patience and your state proven in the small things, in order him not to ask from you the big things. Let it be to you as ruler the small things, so that through them you will topple your enemy over; so that he won't plot against you and dig up bid traps to you. This is for he who doesn't listen to his enemy and that's why he doesn't get even five steps out of his monastic cell where he is appeasing on himself, how could him convince on himself to leave the wilderness and to go near to some village? And him who doesn't accept even to look through the small window of his monastic cell, how could he persuade on himself to get out of his monastic cell? And if him who only in the evening accepts to share the least food possible, how could he be deceived by the thought to eat earlier? And he who feels shame to satiate on himself with the poor food, how could he satiate on himself with fat foods? And he who cannot persuade on himself even to look at his body, how could he be deluded to look in a spying manner at foreign beauties?

So, it is obvious that by being somebody careless in the small things, he will be defeated by those and by that he will give his enemy occasion to war him through the big things. This is because, he who doesn't take care of his temporary life, how will he fear the evil things and the troubles leading to death him who desires it? This is that war waged with right-reckoning, for the wisemen don't allow to be themselves carried towards the big battles, but the patience shown by them into the small things guards them against falling into the great toils.

Firstly, the devil fights to stop the ceaseless taking heed of someone's heart. Then the devil persuades that heart to also despise the times appointed to the taking of heed and the rule fulfilled with the body. And then the devil makes that someone's thought drowsy, by urging him to share on himself, before the established time, with some light food – almost nothing. And after this falling, by loosing the restraint, that someone will slip into unrestraint and in debauchery. In the first place, he is defeated when reckoning an insignificant thing to look at the nakedness of his body, or at the beauty of his limbs, when he gets off his clothes, or when he goes out for his needs, to the water well, and so he will make his senses drowsy, and he will stick his hand under his clothes and he will touch his body. Then there will rise up other things too. And him who guarded in the beginning the steadfastness of his mind and who was sad for each of these things, he will later open big and dreadful entrances against it. This is for the thoughts, if I may use a parable, are like the water and as long as they are controlled from everywhere, they will move in good order, but when they escape even for a little towards the things from outside, they will tear down the wall and they will cause many desertions. This is because the enemy stays looking, stalking, and waiting day and night before our eyes and spying which open entrance of our senses he might come in. And by occurring a certain carelessness in one of the things mentioned before, the cunning and shameless dog will send his arrows too. Sometimes, the nature by itself, it loves the resting and the daring and the laughter and the scattering and the carelessness and it becomes spring of passions and a mirky ocean. On some other times these ones are thrown within the soul by the enemy. But let's change our big toils into small toils, which we reckon them as nothing. This is for, if these ones, as despised by us, as I have shown, will bring us so many big and difficult to endure wars and crowded and entangled battles and big wounds, who won't hurry up to find the sweet resting through these small toils of the beginning?

Oh, wisdom, how wonderful you are and look at how you can see everything form far! Blessed is him who has found you. The wisdom has set us free form the carelessness of our youth. By a small trade or care, it buys the healing of the big passions. A certain philosopher among the philosophers of yore, when he was moved towards the idleness of his thinking and he felt that,

he immediately corrected on himself by suddenly standing up. And some other philosopher saw him and laughed at him because of that. And he answered: "I haven't feared this one, but I fear the recklessness. This is because, often, a small disregarding (of a weakness) can be cause of big dangers. But when I reached into disorder and because I immediately corrected on myself, I have proven myself as awake and I haven't disregarded even that that seemed to be worthy of being disregarded". Actually, this is the philosophy, as even in those very insignificant and small thing one does, him to be always awake. This is for by not sleeping, he gathers treasures of resting, lest something opposite will happen to him. And he cuts off the cause earlier; and because of the insignificant things he endures a small sadness, but by that he avoids enduring a big sadness.

But the mindless ones value more the small resting that is near to them, than the Kingdom form far, because of not knowing that is better enduring torments during the fight than to rest on the beddings of the earthly kingdom, and so they prepare their condemnation because of their idleness. This is for the wisemen desire rather their death than to be condemned for doing something without watchfulness. That's why the wiseman says too: "Take vigil and keep your life under watchfulness. This is for the sleep is a kinship and image of the true death". And the God-bearer Basil says: "Him who gets lazy into the small things, you won't believe him as being worthy of great things".

Do not be lazy to do the things which will make you alive, neither will you hesitate to die for them. This is for the lack of courage is the sign of the idleness. And the mother of both of them is the not-paying-attention to them. The fearful man is sick with two illnesses, namely with the love for his body and with the fewness of his faith. And the love for the body is a sign of the faithlessness. But he who despises these ones he will be strengthened, for he believes in God with the whole his soul, and he waits for the realities to come.

If one got close to God without danger or fights or trials, you too follow his example<sup>168</sup>. The daring of the heart and the despising of the dangers comes out of one among these two causes: either out of the callousness of the hearth, or out of the

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<sup>168</sup> He said this ironically.

much faith into God. The callousness of the heart is followed by the pride, while the faith is followed by the heart's humble cogitation. The man won't be able to gain his trust in God if he hasn't straightened, at least partially, his own will. This is for the trust into God and the manhood of one's heart are born out of the witness of one's conscience; and out of the true witness of our thought we will have our trust into God. And the witness of one's thought consists of not being one condemned by his conscience, because he would have disregarded to fulfill, according to his power, something among the things he owes. And if our heart doesn't condemn us, we will have daring towards God. So, the daring comes out of the deeds of the virtues and out of the good conscience. It is a difficult thing one to enslave his body. And he who feels a little the greatness of the trust into God, he won't be convinced that he necessarily must serve this harsh enemy, that is his body.

### **About Silence and Quietude**

The continuous silence and the guarding of the quietude are born out of these three causes: or for aiming at the vain-glory from people, or out of the warmth of the zeal for virtue, or for one has a godlike dialogue within him and therefore his cogitation is attracted towards that dialogue. So, if one doesn't have the last two ones, it will be obvious that he is mastered by the first helplessness.

The virtue doesn't consist of showing many and diverse deeds committed through the body, but it consists of an all-wise heart by its hope. And this one is united with those-according-to-God-deeds, by the righteous purpose. This is for the cogitation can commit the goods without deeds, but the body cannot benefit without the wisdom of the heart. But the man of God can't stand, when there is place for his good love, not to show his love into the toils of the work for God. In the first state he always progresses, while in the second state he sometimes progresses and sometimes he doesn't<sup>169</sup>. Do not reckon as a

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<sup>169</sup> In the ceaseless cogitation at God the heart continuously progresses. And in showing this state in deeds, sometimes it manages to maintain itself at height and to progress, while on some other times it doesn't. This is because it could come to it also troubles and temptations.

small thing that somebody always remains far from the causes of the passions. And may the glory be forever of our God! Amen.

## **Word XXVII**

### **About the Movements of the Body**

And the movement of the body's lower limbs, that is done without the sharper thoughts of the inappropriate pleasure that moves with heat and it will attract the unwilling would to wickedness, it is doubtlessly born out of the satiation of the belly. And if the belly keeps his good rule of his diet, but the limbs still move unwillingly, regardless how little, you will know that your passions gush out of your body and you will reckon as strong and undefeatable weapon in this fight, the restraining from seeing women. This is because the enemy cannot work within us the things which the nature can work by its power. Do not reckon that the nature forgets the things sown within it in a natural manner by God towards the procreation of children and towards proving them who live in asceticism. But the restraining form deeds it kills the lust from the limbs and it sows within them the forgetfulness and the lost (of the lust).

Something else are the thoughts of the things from far, which simply cross through mind and they cause a brief and unclear movement, and something else are those thoughts sinking the mind into the seeing of the matter, without allowing the mind forgetting about the matter, and which ignite the dead and quench passion, as the oil fuels the burning of the candle, and troubling the sea of the body through the ship of the cogitation<sup>170</sup>. But this natural movement having its dwelling place within us, it cannot disturb our nature and it cannot touch our virginity by its own impulse. This is for God hasn't given to the nature such a power that the nature could defeat its own impulse directed towards Him. That's why, when somebody is stirred up by anger, or by lust, he won't be forced by his natural power to get out of the border of his nature, and

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<sup>170</sup> This is a beautiful image that couldn't have been born except out of people used to the sea. The cogitation, by bearing the thoughts about the tempting things seen into the deep and complex sea of the body, it will make that sea stormy.

so him to reach outside the due things, but that is caused by the adding we do to the nature through the occasions received by our will.

This is for God has created everything good and with measure. And as long as the measure of the natural balance is preserved, and as long as the righteous impulses from within us are preserved, the natural movements cannot force us to leave the due way. And the body will move only in the well-ordered movements. So, we know that we have within us the natural passion, but not in order that passion to entice us and to disturb us in such a way that to impede us from walking the road of the righteousness, neither in order to darken our mind through wrath nor to move us from peace to anger. But is we are sometimes attracted by those things submitted to the senses (which sometimes the wrath takes through the occasion towards an impulse contrary to nature too), either towards eating, or towards drinking, either towards an overwhelming quantity, or toward the closeness to a woman, so that we to tarry in looking at them, or in conversations about them, out of which will be ignited the flame of the lust and it will jump into the body, by that we transform the gentleness of our nature into savageness, either because of the multitude of the juices or because the diverse sights of the things.

Sometimes this movement occurs because it is allowed to (by God), because our self-appreciation. But this one is not like that one mentioned before. We call the wars from before as freedom wars. They are the usual way of the nature. But that war allowed by God, that occurs because of our self-appreciation, we will know it after we have spent a long time in taking of heed and in toils, so that we have reckoned that we have achieved something. Then we are allowed to be warred up, in order us to learn the humbleness. The others, which come without this cause and which are above our power, they come because of our carelessness. They come because our nature, when it received some adding from those submitted to the senses, through the covetousness of our belly, it won't allow to be persuaded to keep its rule had by it by creation. This is because him who rejects those willing troubles and difficulties, he will be force to love the sins. This is because without troubles we cannot part with the flattering urges of our thought. This is for, the more the toils are multiplied, the more will the sins be diminished, given the fact that the troubles and the



dangers kill the sweet addiction to the passions, while the resting fuels them up and makes them grow up.

So, one has been able to limpidly see that God and the angels rejoice of the tribulations which we reach in. And the devil and his hirelings rejoice of our resting. But if the commandments of God are fulfilled in troubles and in tribulations, and we despise these, we doubtlessly will despise Him Who Himself issued these commandments, and we will make unworking the cause of the virtue, namely the tribulations and the trouble. And on the measure of the resting which we share on ourselves with, we will give room to the passions within us. This is for in no restraint body can take place thoughts which are scattered towards the vain realities. But if somebody joyfully endures the toils and the troubles, he will be able to powerfully restrain his thoughts as well. This is for such thoughts cease in toils. But if the man remembers his previous sins and he punishes on himself, then God will take care to rest that man. This is for God rejoices of the fact that that man has given to himself the rebuke for deviating from God's way. And this is the sign of the repentance<sup>171</sup>. And the more one forces his own soul, the more it will be multiplied his honoring from God. But any joy not having its cause into virtue, it will rise up within him who is mastered by it, the movements of his lusts. But you must understand that I said all these things about the passionate lust and not about the natural lust. And the glory be of God forever and ever! Amen.

## **Word XXVIII**

### **About the Vigil during Nights and about Diverse Kinds of Dees**

When you want to stay in the service (the liturgy) of your vigil, by the help from God, do as I am saying to you: bend your knees as usual and then get up and do not start your service

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<sup>171</sup> This is the role of the canon or of the penances, received from the father confessor, willingly, by him who confesses his sins. It is like he himself would give to himself those penances. The priest serves him rather as an adviser.

(liturgy) immediately. But after you have prayer and after you have finished your prayer and after you have sealed your heart and your limbs with the life-maker-sign of the cross. Then, stay for a moment in silence, until your feeling become peaceful and your thoughts become appeased, and then after you will raise your inward look towards the Lord and you will beg Him with grief to strengthen your weakness and to make your verses and the good will of your heart pleasant to His holy will. And then you will peacefully utter in the prayer of your heart, like this:

### **Prayer**

Lord Jesus Christ, my God Who examine Your creation, You Whom my passions and the weakness of our nature and the strength of our enemy are visible, I beg You to Yourself cove me against by evilness. This is for Your power is strong while our nature and power are weak. So, You the good one, You Who know our weakness, You Who do not bear the burden of our helplessness, You guard me against the disturbance of my thoughts and against the deluge of my passions and You make me worthy of this holy service, lets I break its sweetness with my passions and I to be shameless and full of daring before You.

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So, we must start with the whole freedom<sup>172</sup> to our service (liturgy), outside any childish disturbed cogitation. And if we see that there is no much time before the day comes and we are not going to finish our prayers, let's willingly and consciously skip one or two glories of the usual ones, in order not to give room within us to disturbance and so to lose the taste of our service (liturgy) and to mix up the psalms of the first hour.

If, while you are serving, your thought whispers and tells you: "Hurry up a little, in order the work to advance and you to finish earlier", you won't listen to that. And if this thought will trouble you even more, you will immediately go back to the previous glory, or to whatever previous glories you want, and you will utter each verse that wears an image of prayer, with taking-of-heed, for several times. And if you are again troubled

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<sup>172</sup> With the whole freedom from passions and from passionate thoughts.

and thronged by this thought, you will leave the verses and you will bend your knees at prayer and you will say: "I do not want to measure the words but I want to reach the dwelling places"<sup>173</sup>. This is for, on every way which you guide me, I will travel quickly. That people who cast the calf into desert, they walked for forty years, crossing, climbing, and descending the mountains and the hills, and they didn't see the Promised Land even from far.

And if during your vigil the tiredness of standing defeats you, and if you weaken, and if you thought – better said the cunning plotter – tells you in your thought, as through the snake: "End this at once, for you can no longer stand", you will tell him: "No, but I'll rather sit down during the reading of a chapter of psalms" (for this is better than sleeping). "And if my tongue is silent and it doesn't utter psalms, my mind is occupied with God into prayer and dialogue with Him". The vigil is necessarily better than the sleep. But the vigil doesn't consist only of standing, neither it consists only of uttering verses and psalms, but it also takes vigil him: who utters psalms for the whole night; and him who is in repentance and in the prayers of the pricking and in kneelings; and him who is crying and who is in tears and in mourning for his sins. (It was said about one form among the first ones of us, that his prayer was for forty years of a sole word: "I have sinned like a man, but You like a God forgive me". And the fathers felt his cogitating at the content of the verse with sadness. And when he was crying and refusing to be consoled, instead of service he was doing only that prayer day and night). Take vigil him who utters verses for a short time in the evening, and then he spent the whole night in singing troparia; he who is in doxology and in reading and he

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<sup>173</sup> "To reach the dwelling places". "In the house of My Father there are many dwelling places", told us the Only-Begotten Son of God (Jn. 14: 2). And Gregory the Theologian said: "Is it there something to take me to these dwelling places" (For he said previously that dwelling place is the resting and the glory from there, prepared to the blessed ones). Of is it nothing there? Ther it is, certainly. But what is that? It is about the diverse way of living and impulses, among which each one leads to another place, according to the measure of the faith. We call these ones also as ways. Must we travel all these ways or only some of them? It is possible to us, we must travel all of them; and if not, we must travel on as many as possible of them; and if not, at least on some of them. And if cannot do even that, we must travel at least one of them, but one that is especially great, as I think" (In *Word I – About Theology*). This pious one urges us to desire to walk through all the ways of living of the virtue. This is for he adds: "On every of my way which You will guide me, I will travel quickly".

who has set to himself as a law not to bend his knee after that cunning thought waged him war<sup>174</sup>. And be the glory and the mastery of our God, forever and ever! Amen.

### Word XXIX

**About the Ways Leading Close to God and Whis Are Shown  
to the Man out of the Sweet Deeds of the Night Vigil. And  
that They Who Take Vigil They Nourish on Themselves with  
Honey all Their Days**

Do not reckon, oh, man, that in the whole monks' work there is a greater work than the night vigil. Rightly so, brother, the night vigil is the greatest and the most necessary to him who restraints on himself. If him who lives in asceticism is not scattered or troubled by the bodily things and by the worries for the passing realities, but he guards on himself against the world, his cogitation will fly in a short time as it would have wings and it will raise towards the beauty of God and it will reach to His glory and it will float into that above-human-understanding knowledge, through its nimbleness and lightness. You will no longer reckon that monk who perseveres in vigil with the right-reckoning of the mind (with discernment) as a bearer-of-body. This thing truly belongs to the angelic level. This is for it is impossible that they who always live in this kind of living to be left by God without graces (charismas), due to their vigil and due to their worriless thinking at God. That soul that toils living into this vigil and that is adorned with it, that soul will have cherub eyes in order him to always look at the heavenly realities.

I reckon as impossible that him who has chosen with knowledge and with right-reckoning (with discernment) this great and godlike toil, and who has decided to bear his burden, him to toil in this glorious thing which he has chosen for himself and not to guard on himself against the disturbance of the meetings or against the worry for material things, so that him not to be emptied of its wonderful fruits and of its delectation waiting for him to pick those out of it. I dare saying

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<sup>174</sup> Lest by losing the straining of the standing, to be him engulfed by idleness and sleep.

that him who get lazy in doing this, he doesn't know what himself is toiling for and why he doesn't enjoy his sleep. He torments on himself in uttering many verses and in tiring his tongue and in standing for the whole night, by not having his mind in his singing of psalms and in his prayer, but he recklessly tires on himself as one led by his habit. If these things are different, how comes that he doesn't reap out of his ceaseless and tiring sowing, the greatest benefactions and fruits? This is for, if instead of these toils he occupied on himself with the reading of the godlike Scriptures that strengthens the mind and it especially water the payer and helps the vigil, being the vigil's companion and the light of the mind, and sowing of content into the contemplation of the prayer, in order him not to get strayed and to get lost into the vain things. And if he had this one ceaselessly sowing the remembrance of God into his soul the ways of the saints who were well-pleasant to God, making his mind to gain subtlety and wisdom, we would find the ripen fruit of these movements.

Why, therefore, you man, you manage so recklessly your things? You stand for the entire night and you torment on yourself by singing and by reading psalms, in praises and in prayers; but it seems to you such a difficult and big thing to be you found worthy through a very short cogitation during the day, of the grace of God, due to the bad sufferings from your friends<sup>175</sup>. Why do you torment on yourself and during the night you sow but during the day you waste your toil and you are purposeless and you waste the vigil, the watchfulness, and the warmth which you have gained, by losing your toil vainly in meetings with the people and with the things, without no blessed reason? This is for it you followed the night cogitation with the day plowing and you preserved the warmth and you didn't place the separation in the middle<sup>176</sup>, you would attach yourself in a short time to the chest of Jesus<sup>177</sup>. But not it is obvious that you live without right-reckoning (discernment), and you do not know why the monks must take vigil. You reckon that those things have been established only for the

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<sup>175</sup> The meetings and the discussions with the people bring bad souly sufferings, by the disturbances they cause.

<sup>176</sup> It might be about the "distance" between cogitation and God, or a separation between the last night's cogitation and that following to take place the next night.

<sup>177</sup> This is an allusion to Apostle John, who at the Last Supper was leaning his head against Jesus's chest.

sake of tiring you up, and not for something else that it will be born out of them. But him who has been found worthy of being taught by the grace what the fighters against sleep resist the sleep for, and what the force they nature for, and what they raise their prayers on each night for by taking vigil with their bodies and with their thoughts, that one will know the power born out of the guarding during the day and what help it gives that to the mind during the night quietude, and what mastery it receives this over the thoughts, and what cleanness he achieves and what will him be given unforcedly and without fight the swarm of the virtues, and how that makes him understand, into freedom, the good breed of the thoughts. And I even say that, if the body weakens because of its lack of vigor and the body won't be able to fast, the mind can achieve even only by taking vigil the due state of the soul and the mind can give the understanding to the heart, in order to know the spiritual power, only if the mind doesn't get lost by scattering into the daily worries.

That's why I am praying you who want to achieve an awake mind for God and the knowledge of the new life, not to ever disregard during your life the rule of the taking vigil. This is for though its your eyes will be opened so that you will be able to see the whole glory of this living and the power of the way of the righteousness<sup>178</sup>. And if it comes again to you – but that would be better not to take place – and it nests into you some thought of drowsiness, as a test from your Upholder Who usually allows you to change into these, either towards heat or towards cold, either because of some reason, or because of the weakness of your body, either because of not being you able to endure the tiredness of the much psalmody you usually do, and of the prayer with strength, and of the many kneelings which you have been accustomed to do, I am praying you with love, if you are forsaken by these and you cannot fulfill them, you don't sleep, and you at least take vigil by praying into your heart while sitting down, and you don't sleep, by taking the whole diligence you can seat and thing good thoughts. And do not make your heart harsher and do not darken you heart by sleeping. By doing so, there will come again to you, by grace,

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<sup>178</sup> The vigil is a state of continuous focusing of the mind on God. The vigil deepens the meaning of the life, for it sinks into the endless meanings of God Whom all the meanings of our life are in; the vigil brings light in all the things.

that warmth from before and that nimbleness and that power and you will jump up and rejoice and give thanks to God. This is for the coldness and the burdening come to the man out of the lenience (of God) towards being the man tested and proven. And if the man gets up with warmth and if he scatters off all of those from himself, by forcing a little on himself, the grace will come close to him as it was before.

And there will come another power that has hidden within it the whole good and all the kinds of the help. And the man will wonder amazed, by remembering the heaviness from before, and by seeing the vivacity and the power which have come to him, and by seeing the difference between heaviness and vivacity. The man will wonder about what that change unexpectedly occurred like. And from now he becomes wise in such a way, that if a similar heaviness comes to him he will know it out of having experienced the first one. But if the man doesn't toil from the beginning, he won't be able to achieve this knowledge with the work. Can you see how much the man gets wise when he wakes up a little and when enduring in time of war? Only the body's nature not to be weakened, because if that was the case being the nature wared won't be useful. But otherwise, it is good that somebody to force on himself in all the things good for him.

So, the ceaseless quietude, joined with the reading and with the temperate sharing of food and with the taking of vigil, they will wake up the cogitation to be amazed by things<sup>179</sup>, if there is nothing that scatters the quietude. The meanings occurring within them who appease on themselves, without their contribution or thinking, those meanings will make both eyes as baptistery, through the tears shed by eyes and the cheeks will be washed up by those tears.

And when your body gets appeased by restraint and by taking vigil and by attentive appeasement, and when you feel that the subtlety of the passion of the fornication had left the movement of your nature, you will know that you will be tempted by the thoughts of the pride. Then you will mix your food with ashes and you will glue your belly to the ground, and you will examine what you have been thinking and so you will find out the changing of your nature and yours against-nature-deeds, and God might have mercy on you and He will send you

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<sup>179</sup> To be amazed by their wonderful meaning, by their rooting into God.

His light in order you to learn how to be humble, so that your evilness won't increase. Therefore, let's not cease living in ascesis and toiling and striving, until we will see within us the repentance and until we will find the humbleness and until our heart will rest into God Whom are due the glory and the mastery forever and ever. Amen.

### **Word XXX**

#### **About the Giving of Thanks One Must Bring to God and a Few Main Teachings**

The thanks from the receiver entices the given to give even more and greater gifts than before. He who doesn't thank for small gifts he is a liar and unjust in the big things as well. He who is ill and he knows his illness he will search for healing. And he who confesses his pain he gets closer to his healing and he will find that healing easily. Withing the callous heart the pains will multiply<sup>180</sup>, and the torment of that ill man who resists his physician it will increase. There is no unforgivable sin, except that sin which one doesn't repent for<sup>181</sup>. No gift remains unadded, except that gift which we don't give thanks for. The share of the mindless is small in his eyes<sup>182</sup>.

Remember them who surpass you in virtue, in order you to always see on yourself and unreached to their measure. You always cogitate at the biggest troubles of the poor and persecuted, in order you to give thanks for your small and insignificant troubles, so that you to be able to endure your troubles joyfully. During your restraint, drowsiness, and idleness, when you are given and kept by your enemy in a more painful unworthiness and under the tormenting pressing of the sin, you think in your heart at the time from before your

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<sup>180</sup> The callous heart, because of not having love for another, it won't either accept another's love, and that's why it suffers.

<sup>181</sup> Where there is not repentance, that heart won't get mellow because of its pride, and that's why there will remain both the sin of the egotism and the sufferance of that man seeing that he is forsaken.

<sup>182</sup> The proud one, the egotist one, he always reckons that he has and that he has received, from God and from the "life", too little.



striving and what you have been taking care like even of the tiniest things, and remember the ascetics have been proving, and how you have been moved by zeal against them who attempted to impede you on your road. In addition to that, you think also at your sighs which you have been sighing with for your mistakes done because of your carelessness, and how in all of these you have been taking the crowns of the victory. This is for by these memories your soul will be wakened up as from an abyss<sup>183</sup> and your soul will be dressed up with the flame of the zeal and your soul will rise as from dead out of his sinking, and the soul will get elevated and the soul will turn back to his state, through the warmth of the fight against the devils and against the sin.

Remember the falling of the powerful ones and humble on yourself in your virtues. Remember the big mistakes or them who fell yore and who repented later, and remember their height and their honor they experienced after repenting, and you will take courage in your repentance. You persecute on yourself and your enemy will be banished away from your closeness<sup>184</sup>. Reconcile with yourself and the sky will reconcile with the earth<sup>185</sup>. Strive to enter the inner chamber and you will see the heavenly chamber. This is for these ones are one, and in one entrance you will see both of them<sup>186</sup>. The ladder towards that Kingdom is inside you, hidden into your soul. Baptize on yourself into yourself, from the side of the sin<sup>187</sup>, and you will find therein steps which you will be able to climb on.

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<sup>183</sup> As from an abyss of sleep, of forgetfulness, of unconsciousness, of darkness, of something similar to death.

<sup>184</sup> Those who fight within you when a war is waged within you are the earth and the sky, which reach you. The earth fights through your body against the sky while the sky fights through your soul helped by grace, against the earth from within you.

<sup>185</sup> By persecuting your sinful and untrue self from within you, you will banish your enemy away from you, your enemy whom you have allowed to work within you and therefore he gave birth to this illusory self of yours.

<sup>186</sup> That room from the inner treasury is transparent, as a membrane, to the endless chamber or treasury of the sky; or, they are in communication, as the river with the sea.

<sup>187</sup> This immersion of baptism into the self, which contributed to be one freed from sin, and it contributed to the exit from the narrowness of the egotism into the wideness of the communion with God, it makes sense only when taking in account the communication taking place within man between the deep self of the man and the ocean of the godlike energies. "What does it mean: you baptize on yourself into yourself, from the part of the sin, except that in the deep view (contemplation) and in the inward meditation, you cogitate at your sin. This is for of this consists the climbing on the steps into God. In fact, the profligate son, when he came to his senses, and when he took heed at his sins, he found the climbing to his father". It

The Scripture didn't tell us what the things of the future age are. But how we can receive even from here the feeling of their delectation, without a changing of our nature and without leaving this world, the Scripture taught us easily through the names given to some desires and glorified things, whose sweetness and honor the Scripture placed them within us, in order to entice our longing for them. This is for it says: "The things which the eyes haven't seen and the ear hasn't heard" and the others (1 Cor. 2: 9). By this the Scripture has shown us that the future goods are non-comprisable and they have no resemblance to the goods from here.

The spiritual delectation cannot be found in the use of the things existing in a substantial (hypostatical) mode, outside the soul (Lk. 17: 21). If it had not been so, the word: "The Kingdom of Heavens is without you" (Mt. 6: 10), combined with the word: "Your Kingdom come", it would have meant that we take inside us the matter of the things submitted to the senses, as a downpayment to that delectation. This is for it is necessary that, what we are going to have then, to be similar to the downpayment, as the part is similar to the whole. And what is known as in a mirror, though it cannot be seen hypostatically (in substance), it necessarily has the feature of the likeness. But, if it is true the testimony of them who interpreted the Scriptures, this understanding feeling of the Holy Ghost it is also a part of that whole<sup>188</sup>.

Not him who does good deeds loves the virtues, but him who joyfully receives the evils things following that. It is not such a big thing enduring the troubles for virtue, as it is not hesitating the mind in choosing its good will, when it is allured by the body's lust. The sorrow born after losing the self-control, it won't spring joy out of it, and it won't bring reward to them who have it.

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might be that through the Orthodox expression: "It is being baptized the servant of God", the priest ascertains not only an immersion of him who is being baptized from the part of God, but it might be also about an immersion of the baptized one into himself, or a climbing of his into God.

<sup>188</sup> The author rejects that opinion that itself the Kingdom of Heavens would be a part of the Kingdom of Heavens. Feeling the closeness of the Kingdom of Heavens it is not one with the feeling of the things, but it is a work of the Holy Ghost.

Cover him who has mistaken, when you have no loss because of that<sup>189</sup>, and you will encourage him<sup>190</sup>, and you will make on yourself to bear the mercy of your Master<sup>191</sup>. Uphold the word of the weak ones and uphold them who are sad in their heart, and you will be upheld by the right hand of Him Who bears everything<sup>192</sup>. Make on yourself partaker to them who are sad in heart, into the pain of your prayer and into the squeezing of your heart, and a spring of mercy will be open before your asks<sup>193</sup>. Always toil in asks before God, with a heart bearing a clean thought, full of pricking, and God will guard your heart against unclean and dirty thoughts, lets the way of God to be defiled within you. Always persevere in cogitating at what you have read into the godlike Scriptures, in order you to understand the Scriptures exactly, lest by not working your mind your sight to be defiled by looking at foreign debauched filthiness<sup>194</sup>. Do not load up your cogitation with debauched thoughts, or with faces which tempt you, by reckoning that you won't be defeated by them. This is for on this way many wiseman darkened and went insane. Do not pill up flame within your bosom, without stronger troubles of your body<sup>195</sup>.

If it difficult to the youth to submit on itself to the yoke of the holiness, without asceticism. The beginning of the darkening of the mind (when its sign is seen without the soul) it is firstly shown in the getting lazy at the service (at the liturgy) and at prayer. There is no other way of soul's straying except by falling, firstly, from there (from service and from prayer). When the soul is deprived on the help from God, the soul will easily fall into the hands of his enemies. And another: when the soul forsakes

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<sup>189</sup> Cover him up, but don't approve him. This is because otherwise you will damage on yourself, and you won't be useful to him.

<sup>190</sup> You will give him courage to correct on himself.

<sup>191</sup> This too is a burden.

<sup>192</sup> In the hand of him who upholds the weak there is the power of the Right Hand that upholds all the things. This is for God works in order to unite all us by through love. That's why God doesn't directly uphold that one, but Gd wants him to be upheld through us.

<sup>193</sup> By nothing we meet the mercy of God more than in the prayer done because of feeling pain for others. It is here a participation to the pain of Christ for us. And this is a twofold clean sensitiveness. This is for God is the deep of the clean, all-generous sensitiveness.

<sup>194</sup> The mind cannot stay neutral. When the mind isn't occupied with the clean thoughts regarding God, or when the mind is not broadened by those thoughts into God, the mind will narrow on itself or it will be dirtied by defiled, egotistic thought referring to the limited things, which the mind can use for its passing pleasure.

<sup>195</sup> When your body feels troubled by the thoughts and by the tempting faces, they won't have power on you.

the deeds of the virtue, the soul will be necessarily attracted to those opposite to the deeds of the virtue. The moving away from any side is the beginning of the living on the opposite side<sup>196</sup>. If you do the things of the virtue and the things of the soul and if you do not take care of the vain things, you always show your weakness in front of God and so you won't be tempted by foreign things, even if you are left alone by your Upholder.

The work of the cross is twofold because of our twofold nature, that is composed of two parts. One of them consists of enduring the troubles of the cross, by working the wrath (anger) of the soul, and it is called as doing. The second one consists of the subtle work of the mind and of occupying oneself with the godlike things, but also in persevering into prayer and in the following things, that is fulfilled by the lusting part, and it is called as view (contemplation). And the first one, or the doing, it cleans the passionate part of the soul, by the power of the zeal, while the another produced the love of the soul, that is a natural desire that cleans the understanding part of the soul<sup>197</sup>. So, when somebody before getting totally accustomed to the first part, he crosses to working the second part, out of love, not to say that out of laziness, the anger will come upon him because of not killing firstly his earthly limbs, namely because of not healing firstly the weakness of his thoughts by enduring the reproachable deed of the cross<sup>198</sup>. This is for he has dared to make shining within his mind the glory of the cross<sup>199</sup>. This is what the old saints said that if the mind wants to climb the cross before appeasing its senses of weakness, the anger of God will come upon that mind. That climbing that brings the anger

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<sup>196</sup> The moving away from virtue is the beginning of the sin, and inversely too. There is no neutral state.

<sup>197</sup> We are noticing here the fact that also the contemplation (the souly sight) is placed in connection with the cross of the Lord. This is for it comes after the cleaning up the lust of the impulse towards the inferior things, so that it is intertwined with some sufferance. But cleaning up the lust means also the apparition of the clean love within man, and the love means also focusing the mind towards God Who is the spring of the love, or cleaning up the mind of everything that defiles it, of everything that is egotistic. Thus, it is made the connection between the cleaning up of the lust and of the mind, between love and knowledge. And in both of them works the power of the cross of Christ.

<sup>198</sup> Enduring the defamations with the gentleness of the thoughts comes out of the power which Christ has endured the reproaches and the death with, namely which He endured the reproachable deed of the cross.

<sup>199</sup> He who doesn't want to cross through the disgrace of the cross, he imagines that the cross is suddenly bringing glory. The glory of the cross is lives in bearing the cross's disgrace.

of the cross, it is not the suffering of the troubles from the first part, that is the crucifixion of the body, but it is the elevation to the view (contemplation), that is the second part, that one that comes after the healing of the soul. That one whose cogitation is defiled by the dishonoring passions, but he runs to hallucinate through his cogitation the imaginings of the thoughts, he will be hit by rebuking, because of not cleaning up firstly his cogitation into troubles, and because he hasn't brought under control his body's lusts, but from hearing with his ears and from reading the ink of the letters, he has hurried on himself up to walk that full of defilements way, while having himself blind eyes<sup>200</sup>.

But even they who are healthy at their sight and who are full of light and who have gained penetrated-by-grace guides, they still are in danger day and night, even when their eyes are full with tears and while they serve into prayer and into crying for the whole day and night, because of the fear of travel and of precipices which they come across to, and because of the deceiving images which are mixed with the true ones.

Those belonging to God, he says, they come by themselves, without you noticing that. Yes, it is so. But only if the place is clean and not dirty. If the apple of the eye of your soul is not clean, do not dare to focus it upon the solar disk, in order you not to lose even the small light you have, that is the simple faith and the humbleness and the confession from your heart and the small deeds according to your power, and you to be thrown in one of the places of the thoughts (intelligible) ones, that is the darkness from outside God, that bears the image of the hell<sup>201</sup>, like that one who shamelessly dared to enter the wedding place while wearing dirty clothes. And out of the cleanness of the thoughts will come the light of the minds. And from here the mind will be guided by grace where the senses have no power to teach neither to learn.

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<sup>200</sup> There is also a cross that must be imposed to the egotistic, bragging cogitation, and not only to the body. It is the cogitation's unpleasant renunciation to inappropriate thoughts which are foreign to God, thoughts which don't represent the cogitation's bestowing of itself to God, a bestowing which the mind reaches through the true, deep, and of-life-maker understanding of the existence's meanings.

<sup>201</sup> Each group of the thought realities (opposite to those felt with the senses) – namely the groups of the angels – it occupies a place, or a thought state. One place belongs to the fallen angels, namely the hell.

Imagine that virtue is a body, and the sight (the contemplation) is a soul<sup>202</sup>. And both of them compose a consummate man, united into ghost out of two felt parts<sup>203</sup>. And as it is impossible the soul to come to creation and to birth without the consummation of the body's creation, together with all hits limbs, likewise it is impossible to come the soul to the second view (contemplation), that is the ghost of the unveiling, that can be imagines as being formed inside a mother womb, that receives the content of the spiritual seed, without the consummation of the virtue, that is that house where the knowledge is dwelled in, and which received the unveilings<sup>204</sup>.

The view (the contemplation) is the feeling of the mysteries hidden into things and causes<sup>205</sup>. When you hear about your parting with the world, or about the comprising of the world within you, or about the cleanness of the world, you must understand from the beginning and you must know not in a simple manner, but in thoughts meanings, what does it mean the name "world" and of how many different parts the world consists of, and then you will be able to know your soul, how much it is separated from the world and how much mixing your soul has with the world.

The "world" is a comprising name that embraces also the mentioned passions. This is because, if the man doesn't firstly know what the world is, he won't reach to know by how many limbs he is separated from the world or by how many he is tied to the world. There were many who parted with the world through two or three limbs, and because they reckoned that they were composed only of those limbs, they called on themselves as strangers in the world in their behavior, and they didn't limpidly see that through these two limbs they died to the world, but through the other limbs of their they still lived to the world right within their body, but they weren't able to feel that

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<sup>202</sup> The virtue is a body for it is done with the body. And the sight is soul, because it is obtained through the mind.

<sup>203</sup> The ghost has taken the form of the whole man, by the fact that it has made the matter a body, by prolonging the soul's power within matter. And the man works like a living whole into the Ghost. The two parts are felt, for we live into the body the feelings of the soul and, through the soul, the feelings of the body.

<sup>204</sup> In virtues or in the ensemble of the virtue, or in the body spiritualized through them, it is conceived the soul as view (contemplation) of the godlike things.

<sup>205</sup> The author permanently identifies the contemplation, of the knowledge of the godlike things, to the feeling, and therefore to an unmediated contact between them. This idea is at this author equally insistently affirmed as at Saint Simeon the New Theologian.

either within their passions. And because of not feeling those, they didn't take care of healing them<sup>206</sup>.

The world has its name from being known by contemplation, and from the comprising content that embraces the divided passions, in their entirety. This is for when we want to call them passions in their entirety, we call them world. And when we want to show the passions according to their names, we call them passions. And the passions are parts of the world's road advancing from a state to another (which succeed to one another) and where the passions end, there the world stops from this passing from one to another (from its succession)<sup>207</sup>.

And the passions are these: the lust for richness, namely for gathering some things, the delectation of the body (by eating), after which there comes the passions of mating, the passion for desiring honors, out of which springs the envy, the will of ruling over others, the boasting for being a clerk of the government, the adorning and the luxury, the human glory that is the cause of keeping the evil in mind, and the fear for the body. Where these stop from going, there the world will die. And to the extent which some of their parts remain to, to that extent remain also the outside world, but without working (upon man) by its composition. It is like somebody said about the saints: "When they were living, they were dead. This was because while living into their body they didn't live bodily". So, you take heed which of these you are living in, and you will know which parts (passions) you are living to the world through, and which parts you have died to the world with. After you have learnt what the world is, out of that discernment you will know what souly

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<sup>206</sup> They didn't feel that they were intertwined with the world, because they didn't feel these passions of their, by blunting them up. That's why they didn't take care either of healing them, namely to setting on themselves free from the intertwining with the world. Of course, the man can be united with the world through clean love as well, when he sees God through the world, and by that, he sees the truest and deepest meanings of the world. But then he won't be mastered by the world, but by God.

<sup>207</sup> The passions are so much intertwined with the opaque world, seen as the ultimate reality, so that the world, instead of unveiling its true meaning given to the world by cleanly contemplating the world, the world will receive the meaningless meaning imprinted to the world by the passions. In this case the meaning of the world is covered by the totality of the passions. Somebody successively goes with the world, in this meaning, as the world passes from a passion to another. To some people the world is at the beginning what satisfies the covetousness of the belly, and then it is a source of getting rich, and then an occasion for debauchery, and then a platform for affirmation or mastery or of pride. When somebody has liberated on himself from all these passions, the world - in this sense - will have died to him, and the transparent and deepened into God world will have resurrected to him.

states you are in the world through, and which soul states you will have been untied from the world through. And to say it shortly, the world is the bodily living and the bodily thoughts. By being somebody elevated out of these ones, one will know that that one has exited the world.

And somebody's estrangement from the world can be known out of these two things: out of his good living and out of the special quality of his mind's thoughts. So, out of those who sprout out in your cogitation at the things, you will find out the measure of your living. You will find out what things your nature desires, without effort, and which are the thoughts ceaselessly sprouting out, and which move haphazardly, and if your mind has received the feeling of the bodiless realities, or it still moves entirely in a material manner.

And all the seen things stir up the passions. But the seals embodied into things, which the mind imagines unwillingly in everything that the mind does, they can be motifs for virtues. And out of virtues the mind receives the cause of the unweakened warmth and of the gathering of the thoughts on the good purpose of the bodily toil, in order the thoughts to get accustomed, if the mind doesn't work them passionately. Take heed, therefore, you cogitation (your mind) not to weaken in encountering the seals of the thoughts hidden with the higher flame from God, that has the custom to cut off the memories of the vain things<sup>208</sup>.

These few signs shown in this chapter will be sufficient for the man to be enlightened - if he appeases on himself and if he withdraws -, more than many books. The stronger is within man the fear for his body, the more he remains unworking

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<sup>208</sup> The world can wake up not only the passions – because of being the source of the passions and by providing content for satisfying the passions – but it can also be a cause for virtues and it can be material which the beauty and the generosity of the virtues can be imprinted in. A man can imprint in the world his industriousness, another imprints his brotherhood with his fellow humans. But the world urges us to virtues and it is the environment which the virtues can be unequivocally imprinted only when the world is transparent to God, only when through the world shines the flame of God like the fire shines in an oven built up with limestones. This highlights the cosmological character of the passions and of the virtues and the anthropological character of the cosmos. In this sense, the world is dead in its meaning of occasion for passions, but it is alive as environment which the virtues are practiced through, and which the virtues are imprinted in.

This teaching about the union between world and man through passions and virtues, it is one of the many interesting teachings which Saint Issac brings one of the most interesting contributions through.



because of that, among the glorious and honored things. But if over the fear for the body there it emerges the fear for the soul, the fear for the body will weaken in front of the fear for the soul as the wax in front of the flame<sup>209</sup>. And be the glory forever and ever of our God! Amen.

### **Word XXXI**

**About the Diverse Power of Discernment in State of Quietude. And about the Mastery of the Mind and the Extent to which the Mind Has the Power of Defeating the Movements in the Diverse Kinds of the Prayer. And Whis is the Border Given to the Nature in Prayer. And which Is the Extent You Can Pray to. And which Is the Border over which, by Crossing It, the Prayer Is no Longer a Prayer, though that what Is Doe It Is Called with the Name of Prayer**

Glory to Him Who has abundantly poured His gifts within people! This is for He has made them who are bodily to serve Him in the rank of the bodiless natures and He has made the nature of the earthly realities worthy of speaking about such mysteries. And even on sinners as we are, who are not even worthy to hear such words. But by His grace He has open our blind heart, in order our heart to understand them out of contemplating the Scriptures and out of the teaching of the great fathers. This is because of not being I found worthy by my own even to experience one thing out of one thousand, which passed through my hands. But I have wanted to present in this writing especially the aspects related to our enticing and to the enlightenment of our souls and of those souls whom will read it, so that they might get waken in order to willingly get closer to those.

Other is the pleasure of the prayer and something else is the sight of the prayer. The second thing is more precious than the first one, as the man is more consummate than the

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<sup>209</sup> As clear is this *Word* in the first part, as obscure becomes in its second part because of the faultiness of the phrases. The fear of the soul stand for the fear of the soul's fate.

unconsummated little child. Sometimes, the verses become sweet in the mouth and there is born, in prayer, out of a verse, a countless repetition of that verse, one not allowing us to pass to the next verse; and that man doesn't achieve the satiation. Some other time out of prayer is born a certain view that cuts the prayer off the lips, and that man becomes by seeing a kidnapped body, breathless. We call this as the sight of the prayer, and not as the mindless ones say that it would be an image of something or a composition of a hallucination. And again, in the sight of this prayer there is a measure and a diversity of the gifts. And until here it is prayer. This is because the cogitation hasn't yet passed beyond, so that its work no longer be a prayer but above the prayer. This is for the movements of the tongue and of the heart are keys into prayer. And the movements form after that are entrances to treasuries. Here must stop any mouth and tongue and heart, treasurer of the thoughts, and the mind, guide of the senses, and the cogitation, a quickly flying and daring bird, any of their craftsmanships. They who ask, let them remain here! For the Master is present<sup>210</sup>!

## **Word XXXII**

### **About the Clean Prayer**

As the whole power of the laws and of the commandments given by God to the people, are ordered, according to the word of the fathers, until the cleanness of the heart, likewise all the kinds and all the ways of the prayer which the man occupies on himself with, are ordered up to the clean prayer. The sighs and the kneelings and the asks from the heart and the all-sweet weeping, and all the types of the prayer stretch their border and the power of moving on themselves, as I said, up to the clean prayer. And from the clean prayer and up to the inside realities,

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<sup>210</sup> They who want to ask something from God through prayer, let them remain here. This is for if they advance higher, they will no longer be able to ask for anything. Here is present the Master and their preoccupation with themselves and with their needs is made to stop. This is for they forget about themselves in the bewildered contemplation of His greatness; they are in a state of kidnapping, or forgetfulness about themselves.

after it crosses that border, the cogitation will no longer have the possibility to work either in prayer, or in movement, either in crying, or in mastery, either in self-control, or in asking, either in desire, or in pleasure, for anything among the things hoped in life, or for the things from the age to come. That's why, above the clean prayer there is no other kind of prayer. And the whole its movement and all its ways bring the mind up to here by its self-control (of the freedom) power<sup>211</sup>.

Something else is the prayer and something else is the sight from the prayer, though they have their causes one into another. This is for the first one is the seed, while the second one is the gathering of the sheave. When him who reaps goes out of himself through an untold view, the very small and unwrapped seeds which he has sowed, they have sprouted out in front of him as some flourished wheatears. This one reached into his plowing outside any movement. This is for all the done prayer is and ask, or it is giving of thanks, or it is praising. But there won't be any of these or any ask for something, when the mind has crossed this border and it has entered that country! I ask him who knows the truth. This is because this power of discernment is not given to everybody, but only to the seers who have reached to the servants of this mystery or who have been advices by the fathers and so they have learnt the truths by fathers' mouths and they spent their life in these and in similar trials.

### **About Truth, by Question and Answer**

As from tens of thousands of people there barely can be found one who has fulfilled, even for a little, the commandments and the laws, and who has reached the cleanness of his soul, likewise, out of thousands of people, barely one has been found worthy to reach – with much

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<sup>211</sup> Up to here, there is a freedom of movement, a mastery upon the own movements of the cogitation. Here one passes into a motionlessness, into a kidnapping of the looking at the overwhelming glory of the Master. But this surpassing of the state of freedom isn't experienced as an unpleasant forcing, but it is felt like a sweet lack of preoccupation with choosing something from diverse alternatives. Into the glory of the Master, in His unmediated love, all of those will have been forgotten.

guarding – the cleanness of the prayer, and him to cross over it border, and him to be imparted with that mystery. This is because most of them haven't been at all found worthy of the clean prayer, but only few of them. And that mystery after the clean prayer, barely one in a generation has reached it, by the grace of God.

The prayer means asking, it is care and desire for something, or for deliverance from the things from here, or for the future realities, or for we desire to have the fate of the fathers; it is the ask of the man for being helped by God. The soul's movements are limited within these. And the lack of cleanness of the prayer is this: when, on that moment when the mind prepared to make some of the movements which I have spoken about, some foreign thought mixes in it, or some deviation towards something else, and then the prayer is unclean; this is for the prayer has brought of the altar of the Lord some of the unclean animals. And the intelligible altar of the Lord is the heart<sup>212</sup>. And if somebody, by remembering about that prayer called by the Holy Father as spiritual, but he still doesn't understand the meaning of the fathers' words, he said: this one is inside the borders of the spiritual prayer, I reckon that if he studies a little its meaning, he would see that is a blasphemy to say that the spiritual prayer leans towards something. This is because that prayer that leans towards something it is inferior to the spiritual prayer. This is for any spiritual prayer has been liberated of movement. And if barely somebody prayed into cleanness, what should we say about the spiritual prayer? The Holy Fathers had the habit to call all the good moves and all the spiritual deeds with the name of the prayer. But not only them, but also all the ones enlightened through knowledge used to reckon even the good deeds as prayer.

Still, it is obvious that something else is the prayer and something else are the committed deeds. And some people say that the deeds of this s-called spiritual prayer are "way", others say "knowledge", and other say "understanding seeing". Can you see how the Holy Fathers change the names in the spiritual realities? This is because the names can fully match only the things from here. But there isn't any fit of true name for the realities of the age to come. For those there is only a simple

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<sup>212</sup> Saint Mark the Ascetic, *About Baptism*, in *The Romanian Philokalia*, volume I, p. 282.

knowledge, above any name and above any natural element and a shape and a color and an image, combined by their names. That's why, when the soul's knowledge is elevated above the seen world, the Holy Fathers could use whatever names they want, because no one knows exactly the names of the future world. But the Holy Fathers used names and examples in order to support the soul's movements by those, according to the words of that one among saint Dionysus, who said that "we use syllables and names and words which we have at hand because of our senses"<sup>213</sup>. But when through the work of the Ghost the soul is moved towards the godlike realities, our senses and the works from within them are useless. Likewise, the soul's powers are useless to the spiritual work when the soul becomes alike the godhead through the non-understood union, and when the soul is illuminated by the ray of that high light, in its movements<sup>214</sup>.

So, brother, believe that the mind has power to discern its movements up to the place of the clean prayer. When the mind reaches there and it doesn't turn to the previous realities, or it doesn't leave the prayer, the prayer becomes like some kind of mediator between the souly life and the spiritual life. When moving, it is in the souly country; and when it enters the other country it ceases to be a prayer anymore. This is for the saints, in the age to come, they do not pray with the prayer, their mind being drowned by the Ghost, but they dwell, through kidnapping, into the glory that gladdens them. It is likewise to us. When our mind is found worthy of feeling the future happiness, and it forgets about the itself and about all the things from here, the mind no longer has any movement towards something. That's why somebody dares to say, and he is convinced about that, that any committed virtue and the whole order of the prayer, either into body, or into mind, it is led and moved by the freedom of the will; and itself the mind, that is the empress over passions, it is led by freedom through

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<sup>213</sup> Nicephorus Theotokis gives a note: "Dionysus the Areopagite, in his writing *About the Godlike Names* (Chapet I), saying: "Now we are covering according to us... the thought realities through the sensitive things and through the realities which are above-existence and we envelope through shapes and images the shapeless and imageless realities, and we multiply through the variety of the shared symbols that imageless simplicity"."

<sup>214</sup> Saint Issaac transforms the somewhat theological knowledge of the godlike untold in the knowledge achieved through prayer and through the Holy Ghost. Namely, he fills that up with an above-nature-feeling.

senses. But when the Ghost takes over the leadership, and when over the mind reigns His oikonomia, and when He becomes the Manager of our senses and thoughts, the freedom is taken away from nature and the mind is led by His ruling, and the mind no longer leads<sup>215</sup>.

And where the prayer will be, when the nature no longer has power upon itself (against itself), but the nature is led by another power, where the nature doesn't know and it also no longer can direct the movements of the cogitation towards the things it wants, but during that time the nature is kept in slavery and it is led there where it doesn't feel? And it doesn't have either will then, neither "it knows whether it is within body or outside the body", according to the testimony of the Scripture (2 Cor. 12: 2). So, within him who is thus enslaved and who no longer knows about himself, can there still be prayer? That's why, let nobody blaspheme nor daring to say that is possible somebody to pray with a spiritual prayer. This daring is used by them who pray with pride, but they lack the knowledge. They lie to themselves, by saying that, when they want to, they pray with the spiritual prayer. But they who are humble in thought and sapient, they accept to learn from the fathers and to know the borders of the nature and they cannot stand to surrender their cogitation to such a daring.

**Question:** But why, once it is not a prayer, this untold grace still is called as prayer?

**Answer:** We reckon that the reason for that is the following: for it is given to the worthy ones during their prayer and for it takes its occasion out of prayer. For this glorious state has no other time of dwelling, but this time, according to the testimony of the fathers. That's why it is called with the name of prayer, for the mind is led out of prayer towards that happiness and for the prayer is its cause, and because of not taking place on other times, as the writings of the Holy Fathers show. This is

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<sup>215</sup> This is an idea belonging to Saint Isaac, that that soul who has reached to be spiritual, that soul has surrendered his freedom to the Ghost and then that soul is led and no longer leading. But surely the freedom allows to feely be led by the Ghost. The freedom is strengthened by that and not weakened. This is for the man is no longer the slave of any passion. The man is led by love and the man doesn't move on himself so freely in anything as in love. One can say that itself the consummate freedom of the Ghost, that is a consummate freedom of the love, it has become that soul's freedom, or his love.

for we see at many of the saints, by reading their lives, as they stood at prayer while having their mind kidnapped.

And if somebody asked why these great and untold gifts (charismas) take place only during the time of the prayer, we would answer him: for during the time of the prayer the man is more prepared than on any other time, and the man is gathered within himself, so that he can take heed at God and the man desires and he waits for God's mercy. And for telling it briefly, this is the time when somebody stands at the gate of the Kingdom and begs. And the request of him who asks for and who prays it is appropriately fulfilled in the same time. This is because, at what any other time is the man prepared and in state of guarding, as at the time he prays? Or, would it be appropriate the man to receive any of these gifts while sleeping, or while working on something, or when his mind is disturbed? This is for, behold, though the saints have not time of unworking, for they are constantly preoccupied with the spiritual realities, they aren't always prepared to stay at prayer. This is for often they cogitate at something of the present life, or they contemplate the creatures, together with other useful things. But during the prayer, the look of the mind takes heed only at God and towards Him it stretches all its movements and to Him it brings it requests from within heart with effort and with continuous warmth. And that's why, during this time when the soul has only this sole care, it will appropriately spring out of God the godlike benevolence.

This is for we see that the Holy Ghost descends over the bread and the wine placed on the alter, during those moments when the priest is prepared and he stays at prayer and he asks God for lenience and he gathers his mind into this request. And to Zachariah too the angels showed during prayer and the angels heralded him about the birth of John. Likewise, to Peter while he was praying in the house, it appeared him that vision that led him to summon the nations through that fabric descending from heavens, with the creatures in it. Also, to Cornelius, the angels appeared him when he was praying, and the angel told him what he wrote. And to Joshua the son of Navi, God spoke to him when he was standing on his face at prayer. Likewise, the hierarch heard next to the alter, above the Ark of the Covenant, the words of God; and from there he was receiving in a mysterious manner, from God, the views for all the things useful to that time; where the hierarch entered only

once a year, at the fearsome time of the prayer of all the gathered tribes of Israel, he was hearing the words of God through a fearsome untold vision, when he was entering the Holy of the Holies, and when he was throwing on himself on his face at the ground. Of, what fearsome was that mystery like, that was served by that!

Thus, all the views shown to the saints take place during prayer. This is because, what other time is so holy and so appropriate for receiving the gifts (the charisma), as during the prayer which somebody talks to God in? This is for during this time, when one addresses his asks to God, and when the encounters with God take place, the man effortfully gathers all his moves and all his thoughts from all quarters and he no longer thinks except at God, and the man has a heart full of God. That's why the man understands the non-understood ones. This is for the Holy Ghost moves on Himself within the man according to the man's measure. The Holy Ghost moves on Himself within the man taking occasion out of the things which the man prays for. So, the prayer gets interrupted during prayer from its movement and the mind is lit up and immersed into the bewilderment of the kidnapping and the mind forgets about its desire and request. And the mind's movements are baptized in a deep drunkenness, and the mind no longer is in this world, and there is no longer a difference between soul and body, neither is there the memory of something, as the godlike and great Gregory said: "The prayer is the cleanness of the mind and it is cut off through kidnapping by the light of the Holy Trinity". Can you see what the prayer is cut off like, not by the bewilderment of the understanding of those born out of it, as I said at the beginning of this writing and in other places? And again, that one says: "The cleanness of the mind is a trip at height of the thoughts, and it competes with the heavenly color which shines during the prayer in the light of the Holy Trinity"<sup>216</sup>.

**Question:** Ane when is somebody found worthy of receiving the whole this grace?

**Answer:** During the prayer, he says, when the mind disrobed the former man and the mind puts on the new man:

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<sup>216</sup> Evagrius the Monk, *Heads about Discerning the Thoughts*, head no. 18, *The Romanian Philokalia*, volume I, p. 62.



that man of the grace. "Then the mind sees its cleanness alike the heavenly color, which has been called as the place of God by the old men of Israel, when God showed on Himself to them on the mountain"<sup>217</sup>.

So, as I said, this gift of the grace mustn't be called as spiritual prayer, but it must be called as the fruit of the prayer sent through the Holy Ghost. Then the mind reaches above the prayer and, by finding out something that is higher, the prayer stops. And then somebody no longer prays with the prayer, but he goes out of himself (he reaches the ecstasy) in the non-understood realities which are above the world of the mortals; and in its nescience the mind keeps its silence about the things from there. This is that nescience from above-science, which we were told about. This is that one which was said about, that blessed is him who has received the nescience unseparated from the prayer, which may us too be found worthy of, by the grace of the Only Begotten Son of God Whom are due the whole glory and honor and worshipping, now and forever and ever. Amen.

### **Word XXXIII**

#### **About the Kind of the Prayer and about the Other Things Regarding the Ceaseless Remembrance, which are Absolutely Required and which are Useful when Somebody, after Reading Them, He Guards Them with the Right- Reckoning**

The best part of the faith's grace is one to be entrusted about the fulfilling of his prayer, through his hope in God. But the surety of the faith into God is not given by the non-diminution of the confession, thought that is the mother of the faith, but it is given by that soul that knows the truth of God out of the power of the living. Once you find in some of the Scriptures the faith united with the living, do not tie up the knowledge of the faith by remaining to the simple right-confession of it. This is for that faith that gives the certitude of

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<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*

the hope it cannot be ever understood by the unbaptized ones, neither by them who broke the meaning of the truth. This is for the certitude of the hope is given them who have a high life within their soul, on the measure of the virtues, and who take heed at fulfilling the commandments of our Lord.

Ceaselessly mediating at the Scripture, it is the light of the soul. This is for this one imprint within soul useful memories, for guarding one against passions and for persevering into the longing for God, into the cleanness of the prayer. And it also opens in front us the way of the peace on the traces of the saints. Still, do not doubts the verses of our prayers, when are done with much watchfulness and with ceaseless pricking of the heart either the prayers of the reading at any time.

You necessarily admit the words said out of experience (out of trying), even if he who utters those words is illiterate. This is for the great treasuries of the earthly emperors joyfully welcome the adding of a beggar's penny, and the rivers are filled up by small creeks and out of those the rivers' flowing increase.

### **About Guarding Up the Memories**

If the memory of the goods will renew within us the virtue, if we cogitate at them, it is obvious that also the memory of our debauchery it will refresh within our cogitation an ugly lust, if we remember about that. This is because the memory of each one of these imprints to us the different types of the deeds and it brings withing our cogitation and it show us, as by pointing it with the finger, the ugliness of our thoughts, or the height of our living, by imprinting within us the meanings and the impulses either of the things from the right or of the things from the left; and we are thinking at them in the hidden of our mind. And in the cogitation of our mind take image one or another kind of our living and thus we always see on ourselves. So, not only our cogitation harms us, but it harms us also our souly sight and the memory caused by these ones. On the other hand, not only working the virtues helps him who consummate the virtue, but also the kind of the work that takes image out of the memory of the persons working it. And out of this one can know that most of them who have reached the level of the cleanness, are always found worthy, during their nightly

cogitation, of some holy views, and these views imprinted within their souls are to them cause for joy in the understanding<sup>218</sup> occupation of their mind. And that's why they warmly come closer to the work of the virtues and an abundant flame occurs within them, according to their desire. And they say that the holy angels take the countenances of some holy, honored, and good views, and thus the angels show on themselves in the imaginings of the soul, towards elevating the soul's thoughts, towards joy and comforting and gladness. And the day moves their soul to contemplate the new thoughts. And the work of their soul is eased by the joy for the holy realities.

Likewise, in the occurrence of the wars. He who has the habit to cogitate at the evil things is attracted by devils to hallucinations matching the evil thoughts. This is because the devils take countenances and they show to the soul hallucinations that frighten the soul, working that within the soul more in the memories of the day. And sometimes they make the soul weaken because of that imagining frightening the soul, and on some other times they show him the hardship of the living into quietude and into loneliness, and some other things like these.

Therefore us, brothers, let's always use in taking heed at memories and in unveiling the state of the soul in them, the discernment. Let's take heed at the memories of our cogitation, which memories are we tarrying with in dialogues and which memories we quickly banish away when they come closer to our soul; whether we tarry into those coming to us from the will of the devils which throw occasions to the passions, or in the things belonging to the lust, or to the wrath, or in those things coming to us from the holy angels, which bring to us as causes for joy and for knowledge the memories which wake us up through the thought stirred up by them, by their closeness to us, or through those coming to us out of our evil habits which got strengthened from before through senses, out of which move within the soul those thoughts kidnapping us, apart, by one sense or another. And we achieve the experience of these two things by occupying on ourselves with them, with the due discernment. It is about seeing them and accomplishing them

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<sup>218</sup> We think that another traductological solution could be: *intellectual occupation*. (E. I. t.'s n.).

with the deed. But we follow to do to each of them a special prayer.

### **About the Differences of the Love**

The love occurring out of some things is like a small candle nourished with oil, which its light is sustained by; or it is like a creek born out of a rain, whose flowing will stope if the rain ceases fueling that creek up. But that love that has God as its cause, it is like a spring always gushing up and whose flowing will never stop (this is for Him alone is the spring of the love) and whose content will never get exhausted.

### **How You Can Pray in an Unscattered**

Do you want to get delighted in the verses of your religious service and you to receive the feeling of the words of the Ghost, when uttered by you? Let totally go the quantity of the verses and do not take care at all of their measures, or of the care for uttering the verses characteristic to the kinds of prayer; and you forsake any uttering out of habit and you think at what those verse tell you and you thing as what story they tell you and you think at what is told about the reading of some of those who were guided by God. Let your mind tarry in cogitating at those until your soul will get woken up by their high meanings, amazed by God's oikonomia, and but that your soul will move either towards extolling God, or towards the useful sadness. You receive everything is within them towards prayer, and when your mind gets strengthened into these ones, then the disturbance will have left your mind. This is for there is not the peace of the mind into the work of the servant<sup>219</sup>, neither is in the freedom go the sons the confusion of the disturbance. This is because the disturbance has the habit of stealing the taste of the understanding and to rog it out of its meanings, like a leech sucking up the life of the bodies together with the bodies' life. This is because one must call the disturbance, if possible, the chariot of the devils, and this is because satan always has the habit to mount the mind and to

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<sup>219</sup> In the work of that servant who does a botch work.

bring with him the whole burden of the passions, and to enter the weakened soul and to sink that soul into confusion. Take heed at this, with the whole your discernment. Do not be during the utterance of your verses as one receiving the words from another, in order you not to imagine that you multiply too much the work of your cogitation, or else you will get out of the pricking of your heart and from all their joy, but you imagine that those words belong to you so that you will be able to utter your words as an ask full of pricking and with the penetration of the discernment, as one who truly understands his work<sup>220</sup>.

### **Mark up where the Idleness Comes from and where the Scattering Comes from**

The idleness comes out of the scattering of the cogitation. And this one comes out of non-working, of non-reading, and of useless meetings, or out of a too full stomach.

### **We not Resist the Thoughts but to Surrender Them to God**

He who doesn't resists the thoughts sown within us by our enemy, but he cuts off the dialogue with them by praying to God, he shows that his mind has received the wisdom from the grace and that his true knowledge has liberated him of many things; and by finding out the short path that he has reached at, he has cut off the scattering of the long path. This is for we do not have all the time the power to resist all our thoughts rising against us, in order to stop them, but we often receive from them a wound that remains unhealed for a long time. This is for you have as enemies some ones who are six thousand years old. And even if you defeat them, the defilement of those thoughts dirties up you cogitation and their evil stench will remain into your nostrils for a long time. In the first place, you must liberate on yourself from all of these, by fear. This is because there is no other help from God.

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<sup>220</sup> To read the read words as expressing your asks and pains and praises you address to God.

### **About Tears**

The tears from your prayer are a sign of God's mercy, which your soul has been found worthy of, in your repentance; and that is also a sign that your prayer has been accepted and that your prayer has started to enter, by tears, the plain of the cleanness. This is because the eyes won't be able to shed tears if the thoughts at the passing realities are not removed; and if your thoughts do not throw away from them the worry about the world, and if there doesn't occur out of them the contempt for the world; and if your thoughts don't state preparing the victuals for exiting this world; and if thoughts regarding some realities from the future world don't start moving within your soul. This is for the tears come out of the unscattered clean cogitation, out of much, ceaseless, and non-deviated thinking at the mentioned things, and out of the memory of some subtle thing occurring into cogitation and saddening your heart by its memory. Out of these the tears will be multiplied and they will increase in abundance evermore.

### **About the Handwork and about the Love for Money**

When, by persevering into your quietude, you start doing some handwork, you must not make out of this commandment of the fathers a cover for your love for money. Let your handwork be an insignificant thing to you, one destined only for removing your idleness; let it be a thing that doesn't disturb your mind. And if you want to occupy on yourself with the handwork a little more, for the sake of the giving of alms, be aware of the fact that the prayer is superior in level to the giving of alms. And if your world for the need of your body, if your body isn't insatiable, it will be enough to you need that what God sends to you. This is for God has never left His workers deprived of the passing things. This is for the Lord said: "You search firstly for the Kingdom of God and for His righteousness, and all of these will be added to you, before you ask for them" (Mt. 6: 33).

This is for somebody among the saints said that not this is the worthiness of your living to satiate the hungry, neither your monastic cell to become a house for foreign guests. This

living is appointed to them who live within the world and it is rather left as a good thing for them, and not for those who have withdrawn on themselves from within world and who are free of the seen realities, and who guard their mind into prayer.

## **Word XXXIV**

### **About Prostrations and about Other Things**

Do not reckon as non-work the going out of yourself (the ecstasy) of the unscattered, focused, and prolonged prayer, because you have left the psalms. And more than occupying on yourself with uttering verses, you must love in prayer the prostrations. This is for, when the prostrations help you, they will keep the place of the religious service. And when in this service the grace (the charisma) of the tears is given to you, you won't reckon the delectation brought by tears as a non-work. This is for in the grace of the tears stays the fullness of the prayer.

During that time when your cogitation is scattered, you must persevere more in prayer and in reading. But not any writing is useful to you. And you must love the quietude more than the deeds. You must cherish the reading, if possible, more than the standing. This is for this one is the spring of the clean prayer. So, do not let yourself to become lazy by any means, but you gather on yourself up, with watchfulness, out of scattering. This is for the root of the living is the psalmody. But you must know also this: the body's deeds are more useful than the singing of psalms with a scattered mind. And the sadness of the thought is more precious than the body's tiredness. In time of idleness wake yourself up and move your zeal a little. This is for this wake the heart up much and it warms up the soul's thoughts. During idleness, the wrath helps the nature against lust. This is for the wrath scatters the coldness of the soul. And the idleness usually comes upon us because of these reasons: either because of the burdening of our belly, or out of the much-work.

The good order is the light of our soul. There is nothing more precious than the knowledge. Any prayer brought by you at night, let it be in your eyes more precious than all your deed

during the day. Do not burden your belly so that your thought won't be confused, and you won't be disturbed by scattering when you wake up at night; and your limbs won't get drowsy and you won't be full of feminine softness; and your soul won't be darkened and your thoughts won't be murky and you will be able to gather your thoughts up when singing verses. Otherwise, the taste of all of these will be bitter within you, and the singing of verses won't become sweetened to you – namely that sweetness which the mind uses to taste it by the nimbleness and by the light of the cogitation.

And when the good order of the night gets disturbed, the mind will be confused in the day work and, by walking into darkness, the mind won't be delighted – as it is due – either by reading. This is because like a blizzard blows upon the thoughts, either the mind occupies on itself with the prayer or with the meditation. This is for the pleasure given to them who toil during the day, it springs out of the night work into the clean mind. Any man who hasn't tried the prolonged quietude, let him not expect to find out within himself something of the goods of the ascesis, even if he is great, wise, and teacher, and he has many virtues.

Take heed at not letting your body to get too weakened, otherwise the idleness will get stronger against you and your soul; will be hurt by tasting the idleness. Each of us must weigh in, as on a scale, his living. During that time when you are satiated with food, you will guard on yourself against trusting to yourself. Let your sitting down be righteous and only when needed. Especially, you must be temperate and clean during the dinner, and you must take heed at your thoughts and at your limbs. You must guard on yourself against your self-appreciation during your changes into good. You must be zealous in showing your weakness and your simplicity to the Lord, in order you to be guarded when praying against your subtle self-appreciation, and in order you not to be allowed to be tempted by ugly things. This is for the pride is followed by fornication, and the self-appreciations is followed by straying.

Do your handwork for your need, better said you do it in order to tie on yourself up into your quietude. Do not weaken your trust in the Care-Taker. This is for He orders in an illuminated manner the things of His household. He order them who trust Him and who don't trust the people's hands, to dwell the inhabited wilderness. If the Lord help you in the bodily



things without yourself working, when you strive into the care for your soul it will move within you, because of the plot of the killer devil, the thought that the cause of that taking-of-care would be you. And then, with that thought, it will cease God's taking care of you. And on the same instance there will gush up against you a multitude of trials, either because you will be forsaken by the Care-Taker, or because of the renewal of your pains and illnesses move within your body. And God won't forsake you because of the simple movement of this thought, but because your cogitation tarries upon that thought. This is for God won't punish the man and God won't judge the man for the unwilling movement, not even if we consent to that movement for an instance. This is for, if on that very moment we prick up the passion and there will occur within us the pricking of our heart, our Lord won't take in account that carelessness of ours, but the Lord will only punish us if we truly have accepted that into our cogitation and if we have looked at it with insensitiveness and then we have accepted it as one due to us and useful to us and we haven't reckoned it as a damaging worry. And let's always pray to our Lord like this:

### **Prayer**

You Christ the fulfillment of the truth, may Your truth sprout up within our souls; and may us know how to walk according to Your will in your way.

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When a cunning thought is being sown within you, either regarding the things from far, or regarding your habits from before, and when that thought continuously shows itself to your mind, you will truly know that that thought hides a trap to you. That's why wake up on time and take vigil. And if that thought belong to those from the right side and good, you will know that God wants, on a certain mode, to give the life to you and that's why He always moves something within you outside the habit. And if that is a dark thought and you doubt about it, but you cannot reach to limpidly know whether it comes out of your things or it is a thief, or whether it is helpful or it is a trap,

hiding itself under the countenance of the good, you better prepare yourself in prolonged and deep prayer, day and night, with much taking of vigil. Do not reject it, but neither agree it, but pray zealously and warmly relatedly to that thought. And do not cease calling up the Lord. And the Lord will show you where that thought is from.

### **About Silence**

More than everything you must love the silence, for the silence brings you close to the fruits. This is because the tongue is weak in interpreting the godlike realities. Let's firstly force on ourselves to keep our silence. Out of silence will be nor within us something leading us towards silence. May God give you to feel something born out of silence. If you start this way of living, I won't know how much light will be risen to you from here.

Do not reckon, brother, that the things said about this wonderful Arsenius, when the fathers and the brother came to see him, and he sat together with them in silence and he let them go in silence, and that he did that only for he wanted to, but he has been forcing on himself to that since the beginning. Out of getting accustomed to this work it will be born within heart, after a while, a pleasure, and he who has learnt that he will make his body forcedly to persevere in silence. And out of this living will be born within us the multitude of tears. And in a wonderful view, the heart feels something in those tears, through the gift of the discernment, sometimes with tiredness while sometimes in awe (kidnapping/ecstasy). This is for the heart will be diminished and it will become a little child<sup>221</sup>. And when the heart starts praying, there will first flow out the tears.

Greta is that man who, by the patience of his limbs, he has achieved this habit within his soul. When you will place all the deeds of this way of living of yours, on one side, and the silence on the other side, you will find the last one weighing more. People have many ways of comfort. But when somebody get closer to silence, the work of guarding the other ways of comforting will become useless. And all the works of that one

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<sup>221</sup> The little child cries because of feeling himself weak and innocent and he doesn't hide his weakness because of his pride.

will become useless<sup>222</sup>. And himself is elevated above them for he has got closer to consummation.

The silence if the helper of the mind. How so? This is because, as long as we live among many, it will be impossible us not to meet somebody. This is because, not even Arsenius who was like the angels, and who loves the silence more than anybody, he wasn't able to stay separated from them. This is for we unexpectedly meet the father and the brothers living together with us. That worthy of happiness Arsenius, he knew that avoiding them while in church or elsewhere it was not possible, as long as we live among people. And because he was often unable to avoid, in that place where he was living, the encounter with the laymen and with the monks inhabiting those places, he has learnt by grace the way of the ceaseless silence. And if on some occasion, because of an absolute need, he opened his door to some of them, those rejoice even only of seeing him. And the use of the word and the need for word has become useless among them.

Many of the fathers reached, by seeing him, at the state that they guarded on themselves against receiving any adding of spiritual richness to the teaching they received by seeing the blessed Arsenius. And some of them tied on themselves to a rock, with a rope, and they were melting down their bodies with the hunger at times when they felt the urge to go out and see people. This is for the hunger is much useful to restraining one's senses.

I knew, brother, many great and wonderful fathers, who rather took care of the good order of the senses and of the life due to the body, than of deeds. This is for by doing so there will be born the good order of the thoughts. Many causes come upon the man without his will, and they make him get out of the border of his freedom. And if he doesn't guard his senses through a steadfast habituation gained by him previously, he won't be able for a long time to enter back within himself in order him to find his previous state of peace.

The progress of the heart is being done by persevering into hope. The progress of the way of living is being done by

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<sup>222</sup> The works of guarding against evil thoughts will be useless, for in silence there is comprised the guarding too. That is the deep focusing on those godlike realities which overwhelm the attraction power of the thoughts. In it there is also comprised the prayer and the ceaseless thinking at God, and therefore the cleanness of thoughts as well.

detaching it from everything. Remembering the death occasions the good mastery of the limbs from outside. The enchantment of the soul is that joy flourishing up within heart out of hope. The increase in knowledge comes out of the good trials received inside by the mind, on each day, out of the two changes (in good and in temptation). This is for, though on certain times it comes upon us the idleness too, because of the loneliness (and it might be that idleness too is allowed out of oikonomia), we thought have also the comforting from the hope overwhelmingly gushing up out of the work of the faith, a work that we have within our heart. This is for well said somebody among the bearers-of-God, that it is enough to the believer the longing for God, in order to comfort him even if he loses his soul (life) for God. This is because how could the troubles harm him who despises the delectation and the comforting of the future goods<sup>223</sup>?

But I am asking you, brother, this too: let always overcome within you the balance of mercy, until you will feel within you the mercy (of God) on the world<sup>224</sup>. We become mirror by seeing within us the resemblance and the true imprinting of Him Who is God by nature and by being. By this and by those as this one we are lightened to move on ourselves according to God, by a limpid assertiveness. This is because the harsh and unmerciful heart won't even be cleaned up<sup>225</sup>. But the merciful man is a physician right to his soul, for he banishes away the darkness of the passions from within himself, as by a powerful blow. And this is a good duty towards God, according to the word of life from the Gospels.

When you get close to your beddings, tell to it: "Oh, my beddings, you might become my tomb this night. I do not know it whether, at night, instead of a temporary sleep it will enter me the eternal sleep". So, as long as you still have feet, you keep running towards working, before you will be tied with that tie

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<sup>223</sup> We have translated this phrase verbatim. But we kindly draw the reader's attention on the fact that we reckon the content of this saying as at least unusual, if not totally wrong. How could one despise the future delectation and goods?!... (E. l. t.'s n.)

<sup>224</sup> It is about the mercy our Lord has it on people (Mt. 9: 36, or about the mercy of God on the world: "Full is the earth of His mercy (Ps. 32: 5 (in KJB we have: Ps. 33: 5 (E. l. t.'s n.))), and: "Be merciful as your Father merciful is" (Lk. 6: 36). In the mercy of the man there is shown the mercy of God. The man becomes an organ whom God manifests on Himself through.

<sup>225</sup> The callousness is one with the uncleanness, because of being an egotistic preoccupation with oneself.

that cannot be undone. As long as you have fingers, crucify on yourself into prayer, before you reaching your death. As long as you still have eyes, you fill them up with tears before they will be filled up with dirt. This is for as the rose is blown by wind and it withers away, likewise it will happen to one of your sides and you will die. Put within your heart, man, the thought that you will leave from here, by always saying to yourself: "Lo, the envoy sent after me has reached my door! Why am I sitting down? The eternal departure is waiting for me, that one without turning back". He who wants to talk to Christ, he will love the loneliness; and him who loves to be among many, he is a friend of the world. If you love the repentance, you must love the silence too. This is for, outside silence, the repentance cannot be accomplished. And if somebody resists you by word, in this regard, you won't quarrel with him. If you love the silence, the mother of the repentance, you must love with pleasure also the small loss of your soul and the defamation and the injustices coming upon you consequently to that. This is because without this preparation, you won't be able to live into wilderness, in freedom and undisturbed. And if you despite those ones, you will become partaker to silence, according to the will of God, and you will persevere in silence, as God wills. The love for silence is united with a ceaseless waiting for death.

You must also know this, you who have the gift of the discernment, that we do not dwell with our soul into loneliness and into silence and that we do not lock up on ourselves, for those deeds which exceed the deed appointed by canons. This is for it is a known fact that such deeds are more easily done in the congregational life with many, for the zeal it occasions to the body. If such deeds were necessary, there wouldn't be some of the fathers who, by leaving the life of meetings and the community with the people, they chose to live in tombs, and other locked on themselves up in a lonely monastic cell. By doing that, they weakened their body to a certain extent that their body was no longer able to accomplish the canons; and they even endured with pleasure the grave illnesses which came upon them for the whole their life. Because of that, they weren't even able to stand up, neither to make the usual prayer, or to make doxology with their mouth; and they didn't even utter the psalms, nor they did something of the things done with the body. It was enough to them only the helplessness of their body and their quietude, in exchange for all canons. And this was

their way of living during all the days of their life. And in this apparent work, no one of them wanted to leave his monastic cell and, because of not fulfilling some rule, they to walk outside, or to be glad when hearing the voices form within churches of the serving of others.

He who feels his sins is better than him who rises the death, when living amid many. He who sighs for an hour, for his soul, he is better than him who is beneficial to the whole world by his thinking. He who has been found worthy of seeing on himself, he is better than him who has been found worthy of seeing the angels. This is for the last one communicated through his bodily eyes, while the first one communicates through his soul's eyes. He who follows to Christ in the weeping in loneliness, he is better than him who is praised in assemblies. Ad let nobody mention the Apostle's word: "I prayed to be anathema from Christ" (Rom. 9: 3). This is because only him who has received the power of Paul, only him has been ordered to do that too. And Paul received out of the Ghost dwelling within him, that power, towards the benefit of the world, as himself confessed it, for he wasn't doing that by his will: "For it is of big necessity to me, and woe to me if I don't herald it" (1 Cor. 9: 16). And Paul was chosen not for his repentance, but in order him to herald to the people. On this purpose Paul received that overwhelming power.

But let's love the quietude, my brothers, until the law from within our heart will be killed; and let's always remember the death and by that thought let's get closer to God within our heart and let's despise the world's vanity; and the world's pleasure will be despised in our eyes and we will endure, with pleasure, within our sick body, the ceaseless working, that one out of the peaceful living. In order us to be found worthy, by that, of the delectation together with them who live in caves and in the cracks of the earth, waiting for the praised unveiling of God, form heavens. This is for His and of His Father's and of the Holy Ghost are the glory, the honor, the mastery, and the worshipping, forever and ever. Amen.

## **Word XXXV**

### **Why the Souly Men Look at the Spiritual Realities, Knowingly, according to the Thickness of the Body. And How the Cogitation Can Be Elevated out of That. And which Is the Cause of not Being Freed of that. And When and How the Cogitation Can Persevere Outside Imagining During Prayer.**

Blessed in the extolling of God Who opens the door before us, in order us no longer have any other request except desiring Him. This is for, by that, we leave everything and our soul goes out only to follow God, for the soul no longer has any worries which to impede him from seeing God. This is for, the more the cogitation forsakes the worry for the seen realities, on the measure the cogitation is elevated from the taking care of the body and from being occupied with that, the more the cogitation will be thinned and it will be enlightened in prayer. And the more the body is liberated from the ties to the things, the more the cogitation will be liberated as well. And the more the cogitation is freed of the ties of the worries, the more luminous the cogitation will be (it becomes transparent). The more the cogitation is lightened, the more the cogitation will be thinned and it will ascend out of the meanings of this age that is bearer of the thickness of the images. And then the cogitation is able to contemplate God appropriately to Himself<sup>226</sup>. And not as we do it. This is because, if the man doesn't become, firstly, worthy of unveiling, he won't be able to know that unveiling. And if the man doesn't firstly reach to cleanness, his thoughts won't become transparent so that him to be able to see (contemplate) the hidden realities. And until the man is not freed of all the seen realities, according to their creation, he won't be freed of the thoughts regarding those, neither will he get rid of the occupation with the dark thoughts. And where there is darkness, there are also entangled thoughts and passions. And if the man is not freed of those, as I said, and of their causes, his cogitation won't see the hidden realities. That's why our Lord has commanded us, before everything, us to keep the non-

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<sup>226</sup> Contemplating God appropriately to Himself means contemplating him in a godlike manner, and not as we usually contemplate God; namely, by grace and by thinness, and not naturally and coarsely.

earning and us to part with the world's disturbance, and us to detach on ourselves from the worry of all people. "This is for him who doesn't detach on himself from any man and from all his things and who doesn't deny on himself, he won't be able to be My disciple" (Lk. 14: 33).

So, in order the cogitation not to be harmed by all of those, by sight, by hearing, by worrying about material things, by worrying about losing them, by taking care of multiplying them, by somebody, and in order the man to tis on himself only to the hope in Him, our Lords has asked us the rejection of all thought of worry and of the sadness of all things, in order us to desire only the dialogue with Him. But the prayer takes much accustoming to it, so that, by spending a long time in prayer, our cogitation to become wise. This is for, after the non-earning that detaches our thoughts from ties, the prayer requires perseverance. This is for by persevering a long time, the cogitation will gain habituation and it will be able to banish away from itself the thoughts and the cogitation will learn out of much experience aspects impossible to be receives from somebody else. This is for, any kind of living which one has reached to, it takes its power from the previous kind of living, and it requires the previous aspects in order to find the current aspects. The prayer has before itself the withdrawal. And the withdrawal has been done for prayer. And the prayer itself, it has bee done in order us to achieve the love for God. This is for in prayer we find out the reasons for loving God.

But you must also know this too, my beloved ones, that each speaking that is done hiddenly, and with the whole care for correctly understand God, and with the whole cogitation at the spiritual realities, it has its guide and it spring into prayer, and it is reckoned inside the name of the prayer, and they are gathered inside this name, whether it is about the kinds of readings, or about the voices of the mouth raised towards extolling God, or it is about the sad care for the Lord, either it is about the prostrations of the body, or about others, out of which come, successively, the clean prayer, and it is born the love for God.

This is for the love is out of prayer; and the prayer is out of living into withdrawal. And we need the withdrawal; in order us to be able to occupy on ourselves only with God. And the withdrawal is preceded by the rejection of the world. This is because, until the man doesn't reject the world and until he



doesn't get appeased of all the world's realities, he won't be able to get lonely. And before rejection it takes place the patience. And before patience there is the hatred on the world. And before this one, there are the fear and the longing. This is because, if the heart doesn't not get afraid of the Gehenna, and if the heart is not determined by its longing to come to the desire of the Blessings, the hatred for this world won't move within that heart. And if the patience won't precede into cogitation, the man won't be able to choose a place wild and desert of inhabitants. And if the man doesn't choose a more withdrawn life, he won't be able to persevere into prayer. And if the man doesn't persevere in occupying on himself with God, but he remains into the thoughts mixed in prayer and in the things following to that, which I spoke about, he won't reach to feel the love.

So, the love from God comes out of talking to Him. And the occupation with the prayer comes out of quietude, and the quietude comes out of non-earning. And the non-earning is born out of patience and out of hating the lusts. And hating the lust come out of fearing the Gehenna and out of waiting for the Blessings. The lusts are hated by him who know the fruits prepared to him out of them, and who knows also form what kind of happiness he is impede by his lusts. Thus, any kind of living is tied to the previous kind of living and it progresses out of that one, and it will be moved to a higher kind of living. And if one of the ways of living misses, the succeeding way of living couldn't come to existence and it won't be seen. This is for everything gets scattered and lost. And what is more than these, it exceeds the border of the said things. And to our God are due the glory and the extolling forever. Amen.

### **Word XXXVI**

#### **It Is not Appropriate to Desire and to Search for – without an Absolute Need – to Be Done Visible Signs through our Hands**

At any time, the Lord is nigh to help His saints, but He doesn't show His power at any time in a visible manner in some deed, in order us not to get mad because of the help we receive and so that to bring us some harm. And the Lord does this by

taking care of His saints, namely by wanting to show them that they are not, even for a moment, deprived of His hidden care of them. But the Lord lets His saints to work in everything according to their power and so toil in prayer. But in that thing that overwhelms them because of its difficulty and because they got tired and because they have been forsaken by Him, and because of their nature not being on the measure of that thing, the Lord will work Himself according to His power, for they benefit, and the Lord helps them as only Him knows. And the Lord strengthens them until they take power against their trouble. This is for the Lord helps them through the knowledge He has bestowed them, to undo the much-intertwining of their trouble, and the Lord wakes them up, by the undertaking of that trouble, to extoll Him Who is useful to them in both ways. And if there is the need to be shown the deed and the thing, He does absolutely that. But His ways of working are all-wise and He commits those when the saints need that and when they are distressed and not in a regardless manner.

He who shows daring into such a thing and he asks God and he wants to do wonders and power through his hands, he is tempted by the devil that laughs at him, in his cogitation, as one who boasts on himself as one who has weakened in his conscience. We must ask God for help when we are in trouble. But tempting God without an absolute necessity is dangerous. And he who desires to do that he is not truly righteous. To many saints God has fulfilled something through His benevolence. But he who asks for this and who desires this with his will, without this being necessary, he will fall off the guarding for himself and he will slip away from the knowledge of the truth. This is for, he who asks is listened to in what he asks for, as he dares towards God, the cunning one too will find place within himself and the cunning one will move him to bigger sins than this one. But the true righteous, not only that they do not desire this but when they are given these, they reject them. And they do not desire those not only in the eyes of the people, but even secretly within themselves.

This is because, lo, some of the Holy Fathers received into his cleanness, by grace, the gift (charisma) to know in advance the people who were to come to him, and he begged God, together with other saints whom he asked to pray together with him, that that gift to be taken away from him. And if some of the Holy Fathers received gifts (charisma), they received those

because forcedly or due to their simplicity. The godlike sign did not move the others, but they saw that as a happening. That blessed, Saint Amon, when he left to prostrate before Anthony, and he got strayed, what did he say to God? And what God did? Remember Abba Makarios and the others. The true righteous always reckon within themselves that they are unworthy of God. And in this they are proven as true, for they reckon on themselves as sinners and as unworthy of God's care for them. And they confess that in a hidden manner and in a plain manner and they are made wise towards that by the Holy Ghost, in order they not to be forsaken by the care due to them and by the urge to work as long as they still are in this life. This is for the time for resting is appointed to the future age. They who have the Lord as dwelling within them, they do not lust for being into resting or to be delivered from troubles, though they were given, from time to time and for a while, in a mysterious manner, also some comforting into the bodily things.

It is not a virtue that one that, when achieved, it allows the man to forsake its care and its toil. And the dwelling of the Ghost within man can be seen in that that man always forces on himself to obey<sup>227</sup>, despite he could do his thing also restfully. For this is the will of the Lord in them whom He dwells within, that they won't get accustomed to idleness; neither He urges them to search for resting, but they must rather search for toil, and they to surrender on themselves to some abundant troubles. And in trials He strengthens them and He makes them come closer to wisdom. This is the will of the Ghost, that they to be His into toils.

Within them who live in peace, there isn't the Ghost of God, but there is within them the will of the devil, as said one among those who loves God: "I have sworn to die on each day". Of this consists the difference between the sons of God and the others: that they live in troubles while the world shines in delectations and in resting<sup>228</sup>. This is for God hasn't deigned that they who are His beloved to get rest while they still are within body, but God rather wanted them, while they still in the world, to be in trouble, to be burdened, to be in toils, in needs,

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<sup>227</sup> Even in the striving and in the effort of the man towards the good things, there is a sign that God urges him and gives him power to do that. So, it is always maintained the collaboration between grace and the man's freedom.

<sup>228</sup> "Lux" comes from light. The luxury is a light too; but it belongs to the world, as an exterior light, and it doesn't belong to God, because of not starting from interior.

in nakedness, and in loneliness, in illnesses, despised, hit, into the crushing of their heart, in the exhaustion of their body, in straying from their kins, in saddened thought, with a countenance differing from all creation, living a life unlike the ordinary people, in a monastic and peaceful settlement, one unshown to the people's sight, far from people's sight and from all the things gladdening the people here.

They cry while the world laughs; they are sad while the world is glad; they are fasting while the world delights. They toil; day and night and they urge on one another to toils into narrowness and tiredness; some of them, into willing troubles, others tormented by their own passions; and again, others persecuted by people; and others, in the dangers of the passions, of the devils, and of others. Some of them were persecuted, others killed; others wore sheep skins and similar things. And into them has been fulfilled the Lord's word: "In the world you will have troubles, but into Me you will be gladdened" (Jn. 16: 43). The Lord knows that it is impossible, while being us, to enter into the resting of our body, us to live into His love. And that's why He impeded them from resting and from tasting the resting's pleasures. And may Christ - our Savior Whose love is greater than the bodily deaths - show us the strength of His love!

### **Word XXXVII**

#### **About Them Who Live Night to God and Who Spend Their Days into the Love of the Knowledge**

A certain old man wrote on the walls of his monastic cell words and thoughts of many kinds. And he was asked: "What are those?". And he said: "These are the thoughts of the righteousness<sup>229</sup> coming from the angels living together with me, and the right cogitations of the nature which are moving within me. And I write them down at the time they occur to me so that at the time of my darkening to occupy myself with them and they to deliver me from straying".

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<sup>229</sup> Righteousness means in the Holy Scripture the totality of the virtues.

Another old man, being congratulated by his thoughts telling him: "Instead of the perishing world you have been found worthy of an unperishing hope", he answered them: "While I still am on the road, you are praising me vainly; I haven't finished my travel yet".

If you work the things of a great virtue but you do not feel the taste of its reward, you won't donder. This is for, until the man doesn't humble on himself, he won't get the payment for his word. And the reward is not given to the work, but to the humbleness<sup>230</sup>. He who disregards the first one, he will lose the first one. He who has taken it forwards, and who has taken the rewards of the goods, he surpasses even him who have the work of the virtue<sup>231</sup>. The virtue is the mother of the sadness; and out of sadness is born the humbleness; and to the humbleness is given the grace. So, the reward is not given to the virtue, neither to the toil for achieving that virtue, but it is given to the humbleness born out of those. If the humbleness misses, the first ones are done vainly.

The work of the virtue consists of keeping the Lord's commandments. The abundance of the virtue is the good composition of the cogitation. And this one consists of humble cogitation and of guarding. When the first one kiss the power, the power will be received instead of them. This is for Christ doesn't ask for the working of the virtues but He asks for the straightening of the soul. For this He ordered the commandments to them who are under the law. The body works bot the things from the right side and the thigs from the left side. And the cogitation, as it wishes, it either corrects on itself or it wrongs. There are some people working the wisdom in the things from the left side, and there are others who commit the sin under the countenance of some godlike deeds<sup>232</sup>.

The shortcomings<sup>233</sup> of some people who guard on themselves, those shortcomings are guardians of their

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<sup>230</sup> This is for the humbleness doesn't brag itself with it, because he who has the humbleness, he won't feel that he has the humbleness.

<sup>231</sup> It is about that one who has achieved the humbleness before committing the deeds of the righteousness.

<sup>232</sup> By committing the deeds of the virtue and by getting proud for them, you work the evil with godlike appearance, while, by apparently doing the evil, because of your humbleness, you live in the wisdom of God.

<sup>233</sup> "The natural shortcomings, as the helplessness, the lack of courage, the lack of skillfulness, the lack of culture, and the ones alike, are to them who know on themselves occasions for

righteousness. A gift (a charisma) without temptation it will be perdition to them who receive that gift. If you work the good in front of God and if God gives you a gift, you must persuade God to give you also the knowledge on how you must humble on yourself, so that that gift not to become a cause of perdition to you. This is because of not being all the people able to guard the richness without they being harmed.

That soul that has taken upon himself the care for virtue, by living attentively and in the fear of God, that soul won't be without sadness on each day. This is for the virtues have intertwined within them the sadness. He who gets out of troubles, he will doubtlessly separate on himself from virtues as well. If you wish the virtue, you will surrender on yourself to any trouble. This is for the troubles give birth to humbleness. God doesn't want the soul to be worriless. He who wants to be worriless he is in his thought outside the will of God. But we call worry not that regarding the bodies, but that regarding the things paining us and that follows to the good deeds. Until we reach the knowledge, that is the unveiling of the mysteries, we come close to humbleness through trials. Him who is in his virtue without trouble, a door to pride has been to him.

Who wants; therefore, to be non-saddened in his through? The cogitation is unable to tarry into humbleness without causes of passions, neither into the occupation with the clean prayer towards God, without the humble cogitation. In the first place, the man gets far from the worry due in his thought and then he will bring closer to him the ghost of the pride. And, by tarrying the man into that, the angel of the taking-care gets far from him – who is nigh to him –, and so the angel will move within man the worry for righteousness. And when the man commits injustice against the angel and so the angel gets far from the man, the enemy will come closer to the man. And then will no longer be within man the worry for righteousness.

“Before the crushing of the heart, there is the haughtiness”, says the wiseman (Prov. 16: 19). And before the gift (charisma), there is the humbleness. On the measure of the pride that can be seen within soul it will be the measure of the crushing, or of the advising-rebuking coming him from God. The pride is not when it's through quickly crosses through

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humble cogitation, and they are to them who take heed at themselves, as guardians of the virtues”.

cogitation, neither when somebody is defeated by pride for an instant, but it is when the pride tarries within soul. To the first thought it follows the pricking. And the second state, which the pride is loved in, it won't know any pricking. And to out God be the glory forever! Amen.

### **Word XXXVIII**

#### **About the Need for Somebody to Know, out of the Thoughts Moving within Himself, what Measure Does He Reached at**

The man, as long as he is in idleness, he will fear the death. And when the man come nigh to God, he will fear the judgment. But when the man has fully advanced, he will have advanced into love<sup>234</sup>. Out of these ones, there are two by two are tied. How comes? When somebody is in the bodily knowledge he will fear the death. But when he is in the souly knowledge and in the good living, his cogitation will move on each moment to remember the judgment. This is for the nature itself stays righteously and it move on the soul phase and it walks into the self-knowledge and in a living that desires to get closer to God<sup>235</sup>. But when he reaches the knowledge of the truth, through the awakening of the feeling of the mysteries of God, and by the strengthening of the hope for the future realities, the bodily man who fears the death, - as an animal taken to the slaughterhouse -, he will be swallowed by the loves the rational man fears the judgment, while he who has reached to be a son he will be beautified (consummated) into love<sup>236</sup> and he will no longer be guided by the frightening staff. "And I and

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<sup>234</sup> There are three steps: the preoccupation with the body that coincides to the fear of death; the soul knowledge that has a longing for getting nigh to God and that it has the fear of judgment; and the progress into the closeness to God that coincides to the love for God.

<sup>235</sup> If the first stage is a living beneath the nature's level, the second is matching the nature, but it still isn't out of the grace's power. Only the third one is out of grace. In this is the desire of getting closer to God, but there misses the power of the grace for an actual closeness. But when one crosses from a stage to the next one, the first one is engulfed by the second one.

<sup>236</sup> He whom the love from God dawns in, he will have by that a first effect upon the bodily man, by waking up within him the fear of death.

the household of my father will serve God” (Wisdom of Sirach<sup>237</sup> 24: 15).

He who has reached the love for God he will no longer want to remain here. This is for the love removes the fear. My beloved ones, because I have made myself insane<sup>238</sup>, I cannot stand anymore to keep the mystery in silence, but I behave like a mindless one, for the use of the brothers. This is for such is the true love, that it cannot keep something secret any longer from the beloved ones. Often, when I have been writing these things, my hand stopped writing and I was no longer able to move my fingers because of the pleasure emerging within my heart and that was bringing me to the silence of the senses. So, blessed is him who always occupies on himself with God and he stops from everything that is worldly, and the whole his knowledge is occupied only with God. And if he is long-suffering, there greater fruits won't delay from appearing.

That gladness into God is stronger than the life from here. And he who has found it, he not only will no longer look at the passions, but he won't even turn towards his own life; and he will no longer have any feeling of his life, if this joy has come to him out of truth. The love is sweeter than the life<sup>239</sup>. This is for it is sweeter that understanding according to God, out of which is born that love that is sweeter than the honey or than the honeycomb. The love doesn't get sad when it must receive fearsome death for them whom it loves. The love is the daughter of the knowledge<sup>240</sup>. And the knowledge is the daughter of the soul's health. And the soul's health is that power born out of much-suffering<sup>241</sup>.

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<sup>237</sup> *The Book of the Wisdom of Sirach* also called in the ROB as *The Ecclesiastes* (NOT to be confounded to *Ecclesiastes* (Romanian: *Eclesiastul*), it is not given in King James Bible. The interested reader can find it on [www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu) and freely downloaded, grouped together with other 13 book not given in KJB, under the title: *Bible Missing Texts*. (E. I. t.'s n.)

<sup>238</sup> Insane for the love for God, due wot which he no longer values the realities from here.

<sup>239</sup> It is sweeter than the life from here. This is for the love is life too, at its turn. But it is a different life. The love is a totally superior and unperishing life.

<sup>240</sup> When you know the great, the deep personal reality - one that is infinitely loving - of God, and when you know the inexhaustible deep and immortal deep of love of your neighbor, you will no longer be able to love one and not to love another.

<sup>241</sup> It is to be noticed this identification of the soul to the power, and it is to be remarked the explaining of the power through patience. Thus, the suffering of the cross by Christ has strengthened the human souls, as the suffering of the cross and of any trouble bring within us the fruits of power and health. On the opposite, the drowsiness and the lack of patience are sign of and cause to weakness.



**Question:** And what the knowledge is?

**Answer:** It is the feeling of the immortal life<sup>242</sup>.

**Question:** And what the immortal life is?

**Answer:** The feeling of God<sup>243</sup>. This is for out of knowledge there is the love<sup>244</sup>. And the knowledge of God is the empress of all lusts, and that soul that receives it will no longer need any sweetness from on earth. This is for nothing is like that sweetness of the knowledge of God<sup>245</sup>.

### Prayer

“Lord, fill up my heart with the eternal life”.

The eternal life is that comforting into God. And he who has found the comforting into God, he will reckon as no longer needed any worldly comforting.

**Question:** Where can the man feel from, that he has received the wisdom from the Ghost?

**Answer:** From that feeling that teaches him in his hidden and in feelings the kinds of the humbleness<sup>246</sup>. And it is unveiled into his understanding that he has achieved the humbleness<sup>247</sup>.

**Question:** And which are the causes of the passions?

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<sup>242</sup> The knowledge of the decomposing realities doesn't place us in contact with the imperishable essence of the reality and it doesn't give us the power of the everlastingness. “This is the eternal live, they to know You, the true God” (Jn. 17: 3).

<sup>243</sup> In itself the feeling of the immortal and endless life of God, there is the immortality, for this feeling is united with that life.

<sup>244</sup> If out of knowledge there is born the love, the true knowledge must be through the communion with a person whom we can love and in the last analysis through the communion with God's Person Who, by His imperishable love gains our imperishable love, and so He makes us immortal. This knowledge, by giving birth to love, it is itself born out of feeling the love from God. This knowledge has no theoretical and deductive character, but it is an encounter through a feeling of spiritual order. The teaching about knowledge as feeling didn't firstly appear at Saint Simeon the New Theologian as J. Hausherr affirmed.

<sup>245</sup> The knowledge of God is sweet for it is the knowledge of God's love.

<sup>246</sup> The “mode” or the “modes” of the humble existence. The humbleness is the true wisdom, or it sprouts out of the true wisdom.

<sup>247</sup> The feeling is one with the understanding, and vice versa. There is no non-understood feeling, as there is not an understanding lacking any feeling.

**Answer:** They are bites placed in the things of this world which move the body towards the things absolutely necessary to the body. And they won't stop baiting as long as the world exists. But that man who has been found worthy of the godlike gift and who has tasted and who has felt something above all of these, he no longer will allow them enter his heart. But they will remain outside, and unworking. And not because they are bites of the passions, but because of the heart that receives them being dead towards them and for that heart lives something else; and not because that heart has stopped on itself from guarding the right-reckoning (the discernment) and its work, but for is that man's cogitation there is no longer any disturbance cause by something. This is for his conscience has been satiated by the delectation with something else.

That heart that has received the feeling of the spiritual realities and the exact-seeing of the future age, it will remember, in its conscience, of its passions, like a man who is satiated with fine food will look at the poor food placed before him. He won't pay any attention to that poor food and he won't lust it at all, but he will rather feel disgusted by that poor food, and he will turn away from that poor food, not only because of that food being disgusting and unpleasant, but also due to the fact that he has got satiated by the fine food he has eaten before. He won't be like that one who has wasted his share of wealth and now he is searching for roots to eat, after he has wasted his parental inheritance that he had. And won't sleep him who has been entrusted with a treasure.

If we guard the law of the watchfulness and the work of the right-reckoning into knowledge, out of which the live is bringing forth fruits, the war of the baits that stirs up the passions it won't come close to our cogitation by any means. But not the fight impeded the passion to enter our heart, but it does that the satiation of the conscience and the knowledge which the soul has been filled up with, and the desiring of the wonderful views which are in it. These ones will impede the baits from coming closer to the soul, not because they have parted with the guarding, as I said, and not because they have parted with the deeds of the right-reckoning (of the

discernment)<sup>248</sup>, which guard the knowledge of the truth and the light of the soul, but this is because now the fight is of the cogitation, for the reasons mentions by me. This is because the food of the poor disgusts the rich, while the food of the rich sickens the healthy. But the richness and the health are born out of watchfulness and industriousness. Thus, as long as somebody lives, he will need watchfulness and industriousness, and vigil, and guarding his treasure. This is because, if he leaves his rule, he will get sick and he will be robbed. And he must not work only until seeing the fruits, he must work until his death. This is because often the hail destroys the ripen fruits. He who mixes on himself with the things and who scatters on himself into discussions, let him not believe that the health will remain within him.

When you pray, tell this

### **Prayer**

“Lord, make me worthy of truly becoming dead to the discussions from this age”.

And you will know that you have gathered all the heavenly treasures in one. Strive to fulfill this thing within you. This is for if this thing follows to your request, you will truly be free in front of Christ<sup>249</sup>. And to die to the world consists not only of somebody getting far from the partaking to the world's things, but it also consists of no longer desiring any of the world's good things in the dialogue of his cogitation<sup>250</sup>.

If we get accustomed to the good cogitation, we will get ashamed of passions when we meet them. This fact is known to them who have achieved the experience. But we must get

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<sup>248</sup> The guarding and the discernment must be maintained on any level. So, the temptations no longer come to us not because the man is so strengthened that he no longer has to guard on himself, but for he is too much delighted with the higher realities.

<sup>249</sup> He who is dead to the world he will be free in front of Christ and through Christ. Nothing from within the world keeps him in slavery anymore or impeded him from being free in front of Christ.

<sup>250</sup> The cogitation, by occupying itself with the material things, it dialogues with those, or with itself about those. The dialogue with the man with God, occasioned by material things, it has been atrophied in a false dialogue with them, or with himself about the material things. The man is unable to totally stop talking, even when he reckons that he is alone, even when he no longer knows a true partner of dialogue.

ashamed also by the closeness of the causes of the passions. When you want to fulfill a certain thing due to your love for God, you will cross with that desire even the death's border<sup>251</sup>. And so, you will be found worthy, through that thing, to ascend to the level of the testimony above any passion<sup>252</sup> and you will suffer no harm from them who meet you from inside this border, if you endure to the end and you do not get drowsy. The tarrying into the weak thought it will weaken the power of the patience. And the steadfast cogitation bestows him who pursues to persevere in it, also a power not had by the nature<sup>253</sup>.

### **Prayer**

“Lord, make me worthy of hating my own life, for that life into You”.

The living into this work is like them who show, by drawing some lines, things which still are in the state of some sketches. Each one adds or erases from them what he wants, changing the previously drawn lines. And the living into the future realities, it is like those manuscripts written on clean materials and sealed with the imperial seal, which no one can add or erase anything. So, as long as we are on course of changing, let's take heed at ourselves. And as long as we are

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<sup>251</sup> “Maybe this is the meaning: when somebody wants to do a thing for the love for God, he must cogitate that he must even give his own life for God and therefore he must prepare on himself for his death. This is for, thus, he will overcome not only any passion and he will be above any harm coming from the things that can happen to him, but he will also be worthy of the level and of the group of the martyrs, as one who has decided even to die for that thing that he has chosen to fulfill for the love for God”.

<sup>252</sup> He no longer feels any pain, he who confesses Christ out of fiery love for Him.

<sup>253</sup> Staying firmly in your thought at God, it will give your mind a power above its natural power. We have here, again, the mystery of the synergy, of the collaboration between grace and freedom. He who stay strong into the cogitation directed towards God he seems to stay such by himself. But he actually stays strong for the grace hiddenly helps him to make this effort. The grace doesn't exclude the effort of our will, but just the grace shows its work in this effort. When you make effort to succeed in good deeds and you succeed in that, that is a sign that God too helps you. Just the fact that you stand into the firm One it makes you too firm. Just by this we are in an above-nature state. But even in this firm state it is involved an effort of ours. It is true that we keep this firmness more easily, or we keep it only for the grace works within us, but our effort still is implied in the possibility of the nature.

masters upon the manuscript of our life<sup>254</sup>, let's strive to write in it adds of good living and let's erase from it the mistakes of our previous living. This is for, while we still are within the world, God doesn't seal either our good or our bad things, until the moment of our exit, which our work in this country will end in, and we depart for our final trip<sup>255</sup>. As Saint Ephraem said: "We must reckon that our soul is like a ship ready for departure without knowing where the wind will carry it; our soul is like an army not knowing what moment the trumpet will call them to war". And if he tells these about them for the small difference of living happening to them, for they might as well come back, how much more must we adorn and prepare on ourselves before that day that comes suddenly, before that bridge and door of the age to come? May Christ, the Mediator of our life, give us the due preparation, in order us to be supported by that decision we wait for<sup>256</sup>. He Who has the glory and the worshipping and the giving of thanks forever and ever. Amen.

### **Word XXXIX**

#### **About the Angelic Movement towards the Progress of the Soul into the Spiritual Realities Waken Up within Us by the Taking-of-Care of God**

The first thought coming within man out of God's love for people, and that guides the soul towards life, it is that occurring within our heart about the exiting from this world. This thought will be naturally followed by despising the world. And out of it comes within man all the good movement guiding the man towards life and that, the godlike power following to it, it will

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<sup>254</sup> We still are masters upon the manuscript of our life as long as we can intervene for completing it and for strengthening it. But in the moment of our death, we will no longer be able to intervene. Our life's manuscript will be then a definitive one, whether good or bad.

<sup>255</sup> On the moment of our death our life will be definitively rounded as a whole, with its meaning. It might be that, even if we lived longer, we would only prolong the manuscript of our life in the same direction.

<sup>256</sup> To be us supported by the decision of Christ from after our death, so that we won't collapse into the precipice of the darkness and of an inconsistent experience non-founded on His life and into His immortal love as man resurrected to the immortal life.

place this thought within man as a foundation, when God wants to show the life within that man. If the man doesn't quench this thought mentioned by us, by intertwining on himself with the things of the life and with the vanity, but if the man weighs it in though quietude, and if the man continuously perseveres in that thought and he occupied on himself with that thought, this thought will lead the man towards the deep sight (contemplation) that cannot be explained<sup>257</sup>. Satan hates this thought a lot and he fight it with the whole power to pluck it out of man. And if satan could, he would give the man the whole power over the world only to erase, through scattering, this thought from man's mind. And if satan could, as it was said, he would do that with pleasure. This is because the cunning one knows that, if this thoughts tarries within man, the man's cogitation won't remain in this land of the deceit, and satan's plots will no longer come close to that man.

But we do not think at that first thought that moves within us the remembrance of the death, but we think at its fulness that makes the man no longer part with remembering the death and with cogitating at the death, by keeping the man in a continuous kidnapping. That first thought is a bodily one, while the last one is a spiritual view and it is a wonderful grace. And this view is dressed up in luminous meanings. He who has that he will no longer inquire this world and he will no longer tarry into the things regarding to the body.

Rightly so, brothers, if God had left this view to the people even only for a little while, this world would have remained without inheritors. This view is a tie catching us in itself and in front of which the nature cannot stand, and he who has received the occupation with it within his soul he has from God a grace more powerful than any of his works<sup>258</sup>. And that has been given them who are on the middle level<sup>259</sup>, who desire the repentance into the straightening of their heart. It has been given them who doubtlessly know that they really must

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<sup>257</sup> The ceaseless thought at death is a foundation for the new life placed by God within man, for this thought is also a deep sight (feeling) of that endless life that makes transparent, in the same time, the earthly life that is limited and perishable.

<sup>258</sup> That is a view tying the soul to itself, but that also gathers the man out of the scattering that cannot be removed by the nature by any of nature's works. That is a gift from above that is stronger than any of these works.

<sup>259</sup> It is about them who are on the level of contemplating the rationalities of God from within world.

withdraw on themselves from within this world towards a higher life, for His good will, sown by Him, within them, and that remains and increases within them, in their recluse and lonely dwelling. Let's ask for this in our prayers. Let's take long vigils for this and let's ask God to give it to us as an unparalleled grace. And let's no longer get weak again in the toil for this world. This is the beginning of the thoughts of life, which consummates within man in the fullness of the righteousness<sup>260</sup>.

## **Word XL**

### **About the Second Work within the Man**

Another work after this will take place after the man assertively starts into the good living and he comes close and tastes its view and its work, and when, from above, the grace catches him and he tastes the sweetness of the knowledge of the Ghost. The beginning of this one is from here: firstly, the man is convinced by God's taking-of-care regarding the man, and the man is enlightened by his love for his Creator and he wonders about the composition of the rational beings and of God's much care for them.

Out of this comes within man the sweetness of God and the warmth of God's love, and it is lit up within heart and it burns off the soul's and the body's passions. This power is felt by somebody while cogitating wisely at all the natures of the creation and as all the things he comes across and he studies and he spiritually discerns.

From here, through this much and godlike occupation and good conscience, the man starts moving towards the godlike love and he suddenly gets drunk with it as of a wine; and his limbs relax; and his cogitation passes into awe (in ecstasy); and his heart is enslaved to following God. That man reaches to be, as I said, as drunk with wine. And the more his

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<sup>260</sup> A paradox: the thought at death of the faithful is the beginning of the thoughts at the eternal life, and instead of making that man passive it leads that man to the deeds of the virtue.

inward senses are strengthened the more he will also find worthy of the view itself. And the more he strives to live better and to guard on himself and to work in readings and in prayers, the more he will be strengthened and the more their power will become more steadfast within him. Verily, brothers, this happens while he remembers about himself that he still wears this body<sup>261</sup>, but he doesn't know that he is in this world.

This is the beginning of the spiritual view (contemplation) within man and this is the beginning of all the unveilings of the understanding and in this view the understanding grows up out of the hidden realities and it gets strengthened; and though it, it passes towards other levels which are above the human nature. And to say it briefly, through its hand (through its mediation) are brought closer to man all the godlike view and all the unveilings of the Ghost received by the saints in this world, with all the charismas and with all the unveilings which can be known by the nature in this world. This is the root of our feeling sown within us by our Maker. Blessed in that man who has guarded this good seed when fell into his soul, and who raised in up and who hasn't wasted it in the vain things and in the scattering into the perishing realities<sup>262</sup>. And may the glory be of our God forever! Amen.

## **Word XLI**

### **About the Willing Sains and about the Unwilling Sins and about the Sins Committed Haphazardly**

There is a sin made because of weakness, which the man is unwillingly attracted to; and there is a sin done willingly and

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<sup>261</sup> Probably this must be read as: "while he forgets about having a body and he doesn't know that he is in this world". But it might mean also that he paradoxically realizes that, though he sees that he still has a body, he sees his body spiritualized and no longer submitted to the laws from this world.

<sup>262</sup> It is sown within our nature the thought at death together with the feeling that the life from here cannot be everything. This is for this is the reality. It is a thought placed within our nature, according to reality, because without it everything would seem meaningless. But if we cultivate this thought, we will reach to see the realities from above-nature. Thus, between natural and supra-natural there is no contradiction. The supra-natural is the last conclusion of the true natural.



because of nescience. Sometimes, somebody sins haphazardly; and again, because of tarrying and getting accustomed to evil. All these sorts or the sin, though all of them are worthy of being rebuked, when looked from the point of view of the punishment due to them, they are not identical, but some are bigger than others.

To some of the sins it due the harshest rebuke and one expects a great repentance with much toil for them. The sin committed by another is closer to forgiveness. And as Adam and Eva and the snake received, all of them, from God, the same rewards for their sin, but they took very different curses, likewise their descendants: each one takes the harshness of the punishment according to his intention and lust for sinning. And if somebody is drawn to sin unwillingly, but because of his carelessness for virtue, because of not occupying on himself with the virtue, though it is unpleasant to him to live with the sin, he still will receive a harsh punishment<sup>263</sup>. But if it happens to commit sin to somebody who takes care of virtue, to be tempted to commit some mistake, the mercy in order to be him cleaned up of his sin it will be close to him.

Another is, again, the sin of him who takes care of virtue and who perseveres in working the virtue and who takes vigil at night in order him not to lose in any of the things which he takes care of, and during the day he bears his burden in the diverse occupations, the whole his care paying taking heed at virtue; and him who while he is in these and in the similar things, either because of his nescience or because of the things which he comes across with on his way, namely on the way of the virtue, or of the waves continuously rising in his limbs, either because of the tendency happening to rise up within him in order his self-control to be tested, and his scale leans a little on the left side, and he is attracted by the weakness of his body towards some sort of sin which saddens him and makes him grief and he feels sorry for it and he sighs painfully in his soul, for the misfortune happening to his form his enemies.

And another is that (sin) when the man is drowsy and careless in working the virtue and he has totally left the way and he is running as a slave to obey any pleasure of the sins

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<sup>263</sup> If will be harsh to him because, though he sinned unwillingly, that sin still happened because he didn't have any preoccupation with the virtue, because of wanting to live a neutral life.

and he is zealous in contriving all sorts of craftsmanships in order to multiply the pleasure and he is ready, as a slave, to carefully fulfill the will of his enemy and to make his own limbs as weapons of the devil into the whole obedience and he doesn't want at all to take care of repentance, neither he wants to come close to virtue, nor to interrupt and put an end to his perdition way.

And another is that out of the slidings and out of the falls happening to him on his way to virtue and on the path of the righteousness, according to the words of the Holy Fathers who tell that there are, on the way of the virtue and on the path of the righteousness, fallings and oppositions and forceful happenings and things similar to those.

Finally, another is the falling of the soul and the total perdition and the full forsaking.

And it is obvious that one of these, when he falls, he won't forget about the love of his Father, and even if it happen to him to fall in all sorts of mistake he won't stop on himself from good and from his road, but even if he has been defeated, he will rise again and fight his enemy and he will daily lay a new foundation to his collapsed house, by having in his mouth all the way to his exit from this world, the prophetic word: "Do not rejoice of me, my enemy, because I have fallen. For I will rise myself again. And if I sit into darkness, my Lord will enlighten me" (Mic. 7: 8). And he doesn't ever stop the war until his death and he doesn't give himself up in his would until there still s breath of life in him and, even when defeated, he will remain the same. And even if his ship will wreck daily and even fi his cargo will sink daily, he won't stop from taking care of himself, by borrowing from others, and boarding on other ships, and sailing with hope, until the Lord, by seeing his struggle and by having mercy on him, He will send him His mercy and He will bestow him vigorous movements in order him to be able to endure and to answer the fiery arrows shot at him by the enemy. And this is the wisdom given from God, and this is the wise patient who hasn't cut off his hope. It is better us to be judged for certain things that for deserting all the things. That's why, Abba Martinus urges us not to get lazy when facing the multitude of the fights and the diversity of the war and the continuous war face by us on the way of the virtue, and not to turn ourselves back to the previous deeds of ours, and so to give up the enemy his victory over us in a shameful way. As a

loving-of-children father he says, ordering with good-reckoning and simply, these:

### **The Urge from Abba Martinus**

“My sons, if you truly are ascetics and taking heed at virtue and if you take care of you soul within yourself, you will present your mind clean, to Christ, and you will commit the deed that is pleasant to Him. This is for you owe to take upon yourself, for Him, the whole war started by the nature’s passions and by the spell of the world and by the living into the world and by the ceaseless evil things from the devils which they usually meet you with and by all their traps. And do not fear of the ceaseless and persistence harshness of the war and to not hesitate because of the ceaseless fight and do not weaken neither shake because of the enemies’ camps, neither fall into the pit of the despair if it happens to you to maybe slip for a while and to commit sin. But if you suffer something in this big war, and even if you are hit in the face and you are wounded, do not let that at all to impede you from pursuing your good purpose, but you rather stay in the work chosen by you and try to gain the desired and worthy of being praised thing, namely show on yourself strong and steadfast in the war and crowned with the blood of your wounds and do not cease at all fighting your enemies”.

These are the urges of the great old man. So, you ought not to get drowsy, or to get lazy, because of the reasons I told you. This is because, woe to that monk who lied when making his promise, and he stretched his hand to the devil, trampling on his own conscience, in order to rise his enemy against him by one of the small or of the big sorts of the sins, and he is not able to stand again against his enemies with that shredded part of his soul. What face will he meet his Judge with, when his clean brothers will gather together? What will he do when seeing how he separated his way from theirs and he walked the way to perdition and he fell off the daring the pious ones have towards God, and how he fell off the clean prayer ascending from the clean heart and it raises and it crosses above the angelic powers and it is not impeded until it achieved what it is asking for, and it turns back with joy to the mouth for being sent again? That’s why, more frightening than all it is the fact that, as he separated his way from theirs, likewise Christ will

separate him on that day, when the luminous cloud will carry their sparking of cleanness bodies, taking them beyond the heavenly gates. That's why "the lawless won't stand to judgment" because their deeds have been judged even from here, neither "the sinner will rise at judgment in the counsel of the righteous" (Ps. 1: 7<sup>264</sup>).

## **Word XLII**

### **About the Power and the Work of the Evils of the Sin. Which are their Causes and what they Can Be Sopped Like**

Until somebody doesn't truly hate, form within his heart, the sin, he won't be set free of the pleasure of working that sin. This is the heaviest battle fought upon the man, to point of blood. In it is proven the man's self-control in his love that unites all the virtues. This is the power that stirs up and it rises to battle. Its smell weakens the soul that is wicked because of the battle which that soul must prepare on himself for. This is the power of the bigness of the sin, which the enemy uses to confuse through, the soul's powers, which the enemy forces through, the clean movements, to have the experience previously unknown to them. In this we show our patience, my beloved brothers, and our asceticism and our zeal. This is for, this is the time for the unseen battle, which is told that the group of the monks are victorious through. When coming across this war, the rightly-believing mind will get immediately disturbed, if it hasn't prepared itself strongly, in advance.

### **Prayer**

"You are powerful, Lord Who are the spring of all help, to support on these moments, which are confession moments, those souls who joyfully have made on themselves your brides, of the heavenly Bridegroom, and who have wisely made the promise of the holiness through the sincerity of their thoughts, without

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<sup>264</sup> In KJB we have: Ps. 1: 5: "Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous."; in ROB we have" Ps. 1: 5: "That's why the faithless won't stand up to judgment, neither the sinners in the counsel of the righteous."

cunningness. For that You bestow them the power to daringly tear down the fortified walls and all the high places rising against the truth, so that that won't deviated from their target under the unbearable and impossible to withstand against force, during that time that a war is waged against them up to the point of blood."

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But the righteousness doesn't always fight in this awful war. This is because of sometimes taking place a forsaking towards testing. But woe to him who is tested in this war meant to show the difference between ones and others. This is because of this war has gained a great big power out of the habit it has received within them who have surrendered on themselves to the defeat, by agreeing their own thoughts.

Guard on yourselves, oh by beloved ones, against non-working. This is because of being hidden into it a known death. This is for, in the absence of the non-working, the monk won't fall in the hands of them who strive to his him. God won't condemn somebody for the non-uttered psalms of that day, neither for the non-working because of the prayer, but because of giving entrance to the devil by forsaking those works. And when the devils find entrance and they enter and they lock up the doors of our eyes<sup>265</sup>, they will fulfill within us, forcedly and uncleanly, the thing bringing their workers under the godlike judgment, namely under the most awful punishment. And we are guilty of forsaking these small things which we should care of, for Christ, as it was written by the wisest ones. He who hasn't obeyed his will to God, he will obey his enemy. So, you reckon these things seeming small to you as some walls against them who want to enslave you. The fulfillment of those things it has been determined as necessary, inside the monastic cell, by the wisemen keeping the order of the Church, in order to guard our life into the Ghost of the unveiling. On the opposite, forsaking of them is reckoned as unimportant by them who are unwise, by not taking in account what it comes out of forsaking them, at the beginning and at the middle of the road, by causing us and unadvised freedom that is the mother of all passions. It is better us to strive for not forsaking the small things, than to give place to the sin by being loose with the small things. This is for the unexpected end of this untimely freedom will be the slavery.

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<sup>265</sup> They lock the doors of our eyes so that we to be unable to see our laziness, and the fact of us not fulfilling the things we owe to accomplish, and the dwelling of the ugly thoughts within us.

As long as you meet with your senses the things happening to you, you will reckon on yourself as dead<sup>266</sup>; this is for the burning of the sin won't be absent in all your limbs and you won't be able to achieve your salvation. If some monk says into his heart that he guards all of these, that one won't know what will have hit him. He who deceives his brother he will make on himself worthy of the curse of the law. But he who has deceived on himself how much punishment will he get? This is because of not knowing the evilness of the evil deed, he still pretended that he didn't know it. But he is proven as knowing it by his conscience. And he feels his conscience burdened because of pretending that he doesn't know what he actually knows. And may the glory be of our God forever! Amen.

### Word XLIII

**About the Guarding Against and about Avoiding the Drowsy and the Lazy. And that out of Being Close to Them Will Become Masters upon Man the Laziness and the Drowsiness and the Man Will Bew Filled up with All the Passions. About the Need for Guarding on Oneself against the Closeness of the Your People in Order the Mind not to Be Defiled by Thoughts of Fornication**

He who restrains his mouth from gossiping, and who guards his heart against passions. He who always cogitates at God on every moment and he sees (contemplates) the Lord and he banishes the devils away from him and he uproots the seed of their evilness. He who inquires his soul on all moments and he has his heart gladdened by unveilings. And he who gathers the sight of his mind withing himself and he sees in it the ray of the Ghost. He who gets disgusted of any scattering and he sees the Master within his heart. If you love the cleanness, which the Master of all realities can be seen in, you won't gossip against somebody, neither will you listen to somebody who gossips your brother. Ad if some people are quarreling in front of you, you will close your ears and you will run away from there, in order you not to hear angry words and your soul to lose his life. The angry heart is empty of the mysteries of God. And he who is gentle and humble in thought he is the spring of the mysteries of the new age.

Lo, the heavens will be within you, if you are clean; and you will see the angles together with you together with their light and you

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<sup>266</sup> The more alive are your senses – and therefore greedy in looking at the things urging us towards sin – the more soul death you will be.

will see their Master together with them and within them<sup>267</sup>. He who is justly praised, he won't be harmed. But if he gets sweetened because of being praised, he will become an unrewarded worker. The treasure of him who is humble in thought it is within him: and that is the Lord. And him who guards his tongue will never be robbed of this treasure. The silent mouth interprets the mysteries of God, and he who speaks easily he will get far from Him Who has created him<sup>268</sup>. The soul of the kind human being shines more than the sun does, and that soul is gladdened on each moment by seeing the unveilings<sup>269</sup>. He who follows him who loves God, he will be enriched with the mysteries of God. And he who follows the unjust and the pride one, he will get far from God and he will be hated by his friends. He who has a silent tongue will have, through all countenances, the image of the humble cogitation and he will master tirelessly over passions. The passions are uprooted and banished away by the uninterrupted thinking at God. As the dolphin moves and swims in the quietude and in the peace of the felt sea, likewise it moves in the quietude and in the peace of the heart's sea that is undisturbed by wrath or fury, the godlike mysteries and unveilings, towards gladdening that heart<sup>270</sup>.

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<sup>267</sup> As God will be within us if we are clean, or if we are transparent, or if we are non-narrowed by thinking as the limited things, likewise is within the angels who are clean. And also, the angels will be within us, if we are clean. And God Who dwells within us He is always within His angels. And we will see God not only through our transparency but also through His angels' transparency. We will feel God as the Supreme Subject pressing upon us with His love, as a Supreme Spring of Light and of meaning; but we will also see His angels united with Him, as other subjects inviting us through their love and light. It is like, while we feel the love of our father, we will feel even better if we are surrounded, in the same time, by the love of our brothers.

<sup>268</sup> A silent mouth says more than a talkative one. In silence there are concentrated untold mysteries, there is concentrated everything that is a person, apophatically. He who keeps his silence can be seen as absorbed by the view of the mystery of his whole being and of the mystery of God. And these views irradiate out of him, without him needing to speak. The man speaks even when he keeps his silence, unlike the animal. While the talkative has got far from the mysteries from within him. One can feel the void from within the talkative one.

<sup>269</sup> The love, the kindness, they irradiate as a light, for they are a sincere opening of the soul towards the others.

<sup>270</sup> It is being affirmed here the indefinite ocean of the heart. This ocean gains its transparency and it shows its broadness, when it is liberated from the thoughts which egotistically defile and narrow one's heart. And not only in the transparency of the heart's clean indefinite it is shown the infinity of God. But the heart's sea is unveiled though, also when it is not disturbed by anger, or by upset because of the worldly realities. These ones not only that disturb the heart's sea, but they also narrow it for they determine it to focus on one or another of them. But the indefinite of the heart's sea is shown also in the disturbance of the anger. This is because the anger doesn't want to have borders. And if the anger is controlled to some extent, it could be seen beyond it the endless deep and the borderless stretch of the heart on which masters the thought at God and at the mysteries of God's presence, to which deep the anger cannot reach.

He who wants to see the Lord within him he will strive to clean up his heart by the ceaseless remembrance of God<sup>271</sup>. And thus, by the shininess of the eyes of his understanding he will see God on all moments. That what happens to the fish outside the water, that will happen to the mind that has existed the remembrance of God and that has scattered itself into the memories of the world<sup>272</sup>. The more the man gets himself far from the discussions with his fellow humans, the more he will be found worthy of daring towards God within his mind. And the more the man cuts off from him the comforting form this world, the more he will be found worthy of the joy from God into the Holy Ghost. And as the fish are lost in the absence of the water, likewise will be lost from the monk's heat the understanding movements which sprout out of mind, when he continuously walks and spends his time in the world's realities.

It is better a layman who is deprived of the worldly thing and who suffers in the realities of the life, than a monk who suffers the bad things and who lives together with the people in the world. He who asks for God in his heart, with a fiery zeal, day and night, and he plucks off his heart the baits sown by the enemy, he is feared by devils and he is loved by God and by His angels. He who is clean in his soul he has within him that country known with the mind, and that sun that shines within him is the light of the Holy Trinity. The air breathed by the inhabitants of that country is the Comforter and All-Holy Ghost<sup>273</sup>. And the together-sitting with them are the holy and incorporeal natures. And their life and their joy it is Christ, light out of Father's light. One like this gladdens on himself on each moment by his soul's view, but he also wonders about his beauty<sup>274</sup>, that is hundredfold more luminous (more transparent) than the sunlight. This country is the Jerusalem and the Kingdom of God, hidden within us, according to the Lord's word (Lk. 18: 24). This country is the cold of God's glory, which will be entered by them who are clean in their

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<sup>271</sup> Itself the remembrance of God, by being accompanied by the feeling of His infinity, it makes the heart transparent to God. And God's infinity makes the heart to vibrate by touching the heart.

<sup>272</sup> By leaving the remembrance of God, he has exited the feeling of God's infinity and from living that infinity and he has been narrowed, or he suffocates.

<sup>273</sup> The Holy Trinity shines like the Sun, for the Holy Trinity is the communion of the supreme love, and so of the supreme meaning of the existence. The Holy Ghost is like the all-clean air giving us live and that is full with the light of the godlike Sun. That air isn't mixed with any poisoning substance (thinking) which would choke us up to some extent. That air is only love breathing within us only love, as a life-giver-air.

<sup>274</sup> The soul cannot be fully unveiled except in the light of the Holy Trinity, for that light cleans the soul up of the dark cover of the egotism and that light highlights the soul's depths which are transparent to God. But the soul is seen thus in his beauty that is more luminous than the sun is, for the soul is full of the light of the endless love of the Holy Trinity and by its supreme meaning.



heart, in order they to see the face of their Master and their minds to be illuminated by the ray of His light<sup>275</sup>.

But he who is dominated by anger, by furry, by vain-glory, by avarice, and by the covetousness of his belly, and he who spends his time with the people from the world and he wants his will to be done, he who is full of gall and passions, all of these ones live like in a night-fight and they fumble into darkness, while they are outside the country of the life and of the light. This is for that country has been prepared for them who are kind and humble in thought, for them who have cleaned up their hearts. A man cannot see the beauty that is within himself before despising and being disgusted of any beauty from outside him. And a man cannot truly focus on himself on God, until he will totally reject the world. He who despises on himself and who diminishes on himself, he will be made wise by God. And he who reckon on himself as wise, he has fallen off the wisdom of God. The more the tongue restrains on itself from much-speaking, the more the mind is lightened in order to discerns among thoughts. This is because the much-speaking confuses even the wise mind.

He who is poor in worldly things he will be enriched into God. And the friend of the rich ones will be poor of God. I think that he who is righteous and humble in thought, he who doesn't love the daring and who has banished the pride from his heart, when he stands for prayer, he sees within his soul the light of the Holy Ghost and he jumps up by the lightnings of the light and he rejoices seeing that light's glory and the change of his heart in the likeness of that light<sup>276</sup>. There is no other work that can scatter so much the unclean devils' camps as there is the view (contemplation) of God.

### **The Story of a Holy Man**

Somebody of the fathers told me this: "One day, while I was sitting, my mind was enslaved by view. And when it came within me, I sighed strongly. And a devil that was opposing me, when he heard that, he got scared and he was struck like by a

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<sup>275</sup> The cloud is illuminated by the light of the godlike Sun. But, though, they who are in that cloud, or who are covered by that cloud, they realize that that cloud is something else than the godlike Sun, and by this they are guarded as non-confounded to God. Properly-said, itself our being becomes a cloud illuminated by the godlike Sun. And in the fact that we are many, but we become like a sole cloud ("a cloud of witnesses"), it is shown the unity of our nature that will be actualized as a full symphonic unity in the future life.

<sup>276</sup> We have here the hesychastic teaching about the seeing of the godlike light during prayer, much earlier than the Century XIV. But it is also affirmed the transformation of the seers of that light, into light, in that godlike light's likeness.

lightening, and he shouted out because of pain, and he ran away as chased by somebody”.

Blessed is him who remember about his exit from this life and he restrains on himself from attachment to the delectations of this world. This is for he will receive multiplied the happiness at his exit and that happiness won't be absent from him. This one is the one born out of God, and the Holy Ghost is The One Who suckle him at His bosom with that of-life-giver food, and he is imparted with the fragrance of the Holy Ghost towards his gladness. And he who is tied to the people from the world and to the world and to the world's resting and who loves the occupation with the world, he has been deprived on life and I have nothing to say about him except that he cries a pitiful non-comfortable cry, which the heart of them who listen to it is broken by.

You who live in darkness, raise up your heads, so that your faces will shin into light. Get out of the world's passions, so that that Light from within the Father to welcome you, and that Light to command the servants of His mysteries to untie you of your ties, so that you will be able to walk on His traces, towards the Father.

Woe to the things which we are tied to and which we are locked up by, so that we cannot see His glory! May our ties be cut off so that, by asking, us to find our God! If you want to know the people's mysteries and you haven't learnt them from the Holy Ghost, you can learn those mysteries out of the words and out of the behavior and out of the way of organizing of each one, if you are wise. He who is clean in soul and who has a clean living, he always speaks the words of the Holy Ghost with righteousness, and he speaks – according to his measure – about the godlike realities and about the things from himself. But he who has his heart broken by passions, he has also his tongue moved towards passions; and even if he speaks about spiritual things, he speaks passionately in order to unjustly defeat his opponent. This one is known by the wiseman even out a sole answer, and the clean one feels his bad small.

He who tarries in vain-much-speaking, and in scattering with his mind and with his body, he is a fornicator. And he who consents with him and who accompanies him, he is a fornicator too. And he who is partaker (in communion) with him, he is an idolater. The friendship with the young man is a fornication which God is disgusted by. This illness has no cure. And he

who loves all people equally, mercifully, and in an undifferentiated manner, he has reached the consummation. The young man searching for the company of another young man, he makes them who have the right-reckoning (the discernment) crying and weeping. But the old man searching for the company of a younger man he has achieved a more disgusting passion than that of the young men. Even if he spoke to the young people about virtues, his heart would be wounded. The humble in thought young man, who lives in quietude and who is has his heart clean of envy and of wrath and who keeps himself away from people and who takes heed at himself, he will understand the passion of the careless old man. Avoid having anything to do with that old man who doesn't look at other old man and at the young man equally, and rather get far from him with the whole your strength.

Woe to them who are careless, who nourish their passions, while hypocritically mimicking the image of the cleanness. And him who has reached to have grey hairs in the cleanness of his thought and of his living and in the restraining of his tongue, he is delighted even from here with the sweetness of the fruit of the conscience<sup>277</sup>, and at the time of his exit from his body he will receive the glory of God. Nothing cools down the fire of the Holy Ghost - working within monk's heart to the sanctification of his soul<sup>278</sup> - than the living and the much-speaking and the encounters others than those with the sons of the mysteries of God and which are towards increasing his knowledge about God and the closeness to God. This is for the last kind of meetings wake up the soul towards life and they uproot the passion and put the dirty thoughts to sleep more than all virtues. Do not gain as friends and as trustees but this king of people, in order you not to cause offense to your soul and so you to deviate from the way to God. Let's you soul extoll that love that unites you and that attaches you to God, in order you not to be taken into slavery by the love for the world whose cause and end is the corruption. The living together with them who live in asceticism it will enrich both you and them with the mysteries of God. And the love for the frivolous and lazy ones it

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<sup>277</sup> It is the fruit of the true knowledge, a knowledge opposed to the liar knowledge, which was lusted by Adam and Eva. One can reach the fruit of the true knowledge by restraining on himself from the bodily lusts, and not by being greedy of bodily pleasures.

<sup>278</sup> Without the fire of the clean zeal, one cannot reach to holiness. This fire is from the Holy Ghost Who is the spring of the holiness, as spring of the true love.

will fill you bely up to satiation and it will make you feel the insatiable lust for the scattering with others. One like this one doesn't like eating except in the company of his friends, and he says: "Woe to him who eats his bread in loneliness, because he won't be sweetened by it". This is because they who invite on one another to feasts they are rewarded like some hirelings. Run away, brother, from they who are accustomed to such a living, and do not ever eat together with them, even if you need food. This is because their food is unclean and they have gained as their servants the devils. Th friends of Christ do not taste that food.

He who prepares often feats, he is the hireling of the devil of the fornication and he defiles the soul of him who is humble in though. The humble bread from the table of the clean one it cleans the soul of him who eats it of all passions. The smell of the table of the greedy one is scattered by the waste of meals and of cookies. And the mindless and unwise one is attracted by that as a dog to the slaughterhouse. And the table off him who always persevered into prayer it is sweeter than any smell of veal and spices. And he who loves God he will desire this as a priceless treasure.

Take medicine for your life, form the table of them who are fasting, and who take vigil and who toil into the Lord, and remove the death from your soul. This is for the belove One rests Himself amid the saints, and He transforms the bitterness of their tiredness in the impossible-to-tell sweetness of His<sup>279</sup>. And His spiritual and heavenly servants overshadow them and their holy foods. I know a certain brother who sees that with his own eyes.

Blessed is him who has restrained his mouth form all the passionate sweetness which separates him from hid Creator. Blessed is him who has as food that Bread that descended form heavens and that bestowed life to the world<sup>280</sup>. Blessed is him who has seen in his plain that water that springs out of the bosom of the Father, and he has focused his eye on it. This is for when he drinks it, he gladdens and his heart flourishes and it will be into gladness and joy. He who has seen his Lord in his

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<sup>279</sup> So rested Christ at the table of the poor during His living on earth, comforting and cleaning them up with His love.

<sup>280</sup> This text is categorically anti-Nestorian. The body of the Holy Impartation is not of a man differing from the Word, but it is itself the body of the Word.

food, he will go secretly and alone to be imparted with Him, and not together with the unworthy ones, in order him not to have communion with those and in order to avoid being emptied of His ray. And he who has mortal venom mixed in his food, he won't be able to be imparted with that without his companions<sup>281</sup>. He who is friends with his belly he is a wolf tasting the causing-of-death poison. How insatiable you are, you the crazy one, because of wanting to fill up your belly at the table of the careless ones, whom your soul is filled up from, with all the passions! These cautions are enough to them who can control their belly.

The fragrance spread by him who is fasting, it is very sweet, and the encounter with him gladdens the heart of them who have the gift of the discernment. But the covetous one if filled with fear when encountering the one who is fasting, and the covetous one avoid sitting at the same table with him.

The living of him who is restrained it is pleasant to God but his neighborhood is hard to be endured by him who love the material earning. He who is silent is very praised by Christ. And to them who are enslaved by devils through traps and scatterings, the closeness to the silent one is unpleasant. Who doesn't love him who is humble in thought? Only they who are proud and gossipers and who are stranger to his work.

### **The Story of a Saint**

A certain man among those who tried these things, he told me this: "On those days which I am in the company of the people, I eat three or four pieces of dry bread a day. But if I force myself to prayer, my mind has no daring towards God, neither can I focus on Him. But when I get far from them, in order to appease on myself, on the first day I force myself to eat only one and a half pieces of dry bread, and on the second day only one piece of dry bread. And when my mind gets strengthened into quietude, I force myself to eat a whole piece of dry bread a day and I cannot do it. And my mind talks, ceaselessly and daringly,

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<sup>281</sup> Homiakov said that everyone who falls, he falls alone. But this one gets lonely in his deep. At the surface he is together with others who are frivolous as he is. Thus, there takes place a reciprocal urge to sin, as separation among them and of themselves from God, into deep. This is an aspect of that "Man" described by Heidegger.

to God, without I forcing on myself. And God's light lightens me uninterruptedly and it attracts me to see it and I get glad for the beauty of the godlike light. And if it happens somebody to enter during the time of the quietude, and he speaks to me even for an instant, it will be impossible to me not to increase the quantity of the food and not to diminish the quantity of my prayers and not to let my mind weakened in the seeing of that light".

Lo, my brothers, how good and how useful is the patience and the loneliness and what a power and facilitation they bestow to them who live in asceticism. Blessed is him who endures for God into quietude and who eats his bread in loneliness. This is for he always speaks to God. Of God be the glory and the mastery now and forever and ever! Amen.

## **Word XLIV**

### **About Senses and About Temptations**

The righteous and gathered together senses, they will give birth, without the soul, to the peace, and so they won't allow the soul to try out the things. When the senses do not deceive the feeling of the things, the victory will be gained without fight. But when the man is careless and so he allows the baits (the attacks) entering him, he will be forced to fight. And the first cleanness that is all-simple and peaceful will be disturbed. And most of the people, or even all the people, because of this carelessness they leave their natural and clean state. That's why they who are within world and mixed with the worldly realities they won't be able to lean up their cogitation because of the much-knowledge of the evil. And only few of them can turn back to the first cleanness of their thought. That's why each man must always guard, with the whole his care, his senses and his cogitation, against baits. And for that one needs much watchfulness, peace, and taking of heed.

We owe to live with much simplicity. In order to do that, the human nature needs to fear, in order to guard the orders of the obedience to God. and the love for God moves us towards desiring the virtues and by that it kidnaps us towards the good

doing. The spiritual knowledge is by nature, the second after the working of the virtues<sup>282</sup>. But both of them are preceded by fear and by love; and the love is preceded, again, by fear. Everyone who shamelessly says that one can gain the second ones without firstly working the first ones, they have laid within their soul the first foundation of the perdition. This is for this is the path of the Lord. This is for the last ones are born out of the first ones.

Do not change our love for your brother for the love for a certain material thing<sup>283</sup>. This is for your brother has within himself, without being seen, something that is more precious than anything. You leave the unimportant realities in order you to find the precious realities. You be like a dead one during your life, so that you will live after your death<sup>284</sup>. You give on yourself to the death into asceticism instead of you living into idleness. Not only them who received the death for their faith into Christ are martyrs, but martyrs are also they who die for keeping His commandments<sup>285</sup>. Do not be mindless in your requests, in order you to avoid dishonoring God through the smallness of your knowledge. Be wise in your prayers so that you will be found worthy of the glorious realities<sup>286</sup>. You ask for the honored things from Him Who doesn't envy, in order you to receive the honor from Him, for your wise will. Solomon asked for wisdom and he received together with the wisdom his kingdom, for he asked from the Great Emperor like a wiseman. Elijah asked for the grace of the Ghost, in a twofold manner, that was within his teacher, and he wasn't left without his request being fulfilled. This is because of him who asks the Emperor for unimportant things, he despised the Emperor's

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<sup>282</sup> It is the knowledge of the godlike rationalities of the things, which comes to the man after he has cleaned on himself of passions.

<sup>283</sup> The object is limited; it has no interior conscious and free dimension, it doesn't communicate love, and it can be manipulated for the egotistic benefit. One must respect the person for the person herself/himself, as free and conscious spring of inexhaustible communication of the love, a love thirsty of endlessly giving and receiving of love. One cannot totally master the love.

<sup>284</sup> Namely, you don't cultivate the egotistical attachment to the material things, so that you will start having out of the communion with God and with your fellow humans that life that never ends, for what those ones can give you it won't get exhausted.

<sup>285</sup> Namely they lose the perishing live for the love for the Supreme Person out of Who we can have the immortal life.

<sup>286</sup> Do not ask for the perishing things, but you must ask for the love from God, that love that lasts and that will be eternally bestowed to you by its endlessness.

honor. Israel asked for unimportant things and they attracted the anger of God. This was because Israel didn't think at being illuminated by the fearsome realities of God in their things, but they only asked for what they needed to fill up their stomach. And that's why, "while the food was still in their mouth, the anger of God mounted upon them" (Ps. 77: 34<sup>287</sup>). Present your asks to God on the measure of His glory, so that your glory to grow bigger through Him, and He will rejoice of you"<sup>288</sup>. This is because, like him who asks from the emperor for a little garbage, he not only dishonors on himself for the thing he has asked, because of proving much nescience, but he has also offended the emperor by his request, likewise is him who asks God for earthly things in his prayers. This is for the angels and the archangels, who are the great clerks of God, they look at you when you pray, in order they to see what things you are asking their Master for, and they are amazed and glad when seeing the earthly one forgetting about his body and asking for the heavenly realities, as they, again, get angry with him who has left the heavenly realities and who asks for his garbage.

Do not ask God for a thing He takes care of bestowing it without one asking Him for that thing, namely for a thing that He bestows it not only to the beloved ones of Him, but also to them who do not know about God. This is for our Lord said that the pagans ask for the bodily things. "And you do not worry about what are you going to eat, or what are you going to drink, or what are you going to put on" (Mt. 6: 31). The son no longer asks his father for bread, but he asks for the important and much precious things from the house of his father. For the helplessness of our human cogitation our Lord commanded us to ask for the daily bread. You take heed at what He

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<sup>287</sup> In KJB we have: Ps. 78: 30-31: "They were not estranged from their lust. But while their meat was yet in their mouths, // The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel."; in ROB we have: Ps. 77: 34-35: "Nothing missed of the things they lusted for and their food was still in their mouth, // When the anger of God rose upon them and killed the satiated of theirs and it brought down the chosen ones of Israel." (E. I. t.'s n.)

<sup>288</sup> The more you are adorned by God with a bigger glory, out of His love, the more He will rejoice of you. This is because in your increased glory it is shown the glory of His love and your will to accept it and to answer it. Of course, the more you ask Him for higher things, the more you must force on yourself to become able to receive the things you ask for, namely you to believe according to those things. The more love you ask for from Him, the more you must make on yourself able to receive His love and to understand His love through your love. He who asks God for unimportant things, he won't know what great things God can bestow.



commanded them who are consummate into knowledge and healthy in their soul: “Do not worry about food, he says, or about clothing” (Mt. 6: 28). “This is for, if He takes care of the speechless beasts and of fowls and even of the inanimate things, won’t He do that much more for you? But you rather ask for the Kingdom of Heavens and for His righteousness and all of these will be added to you” (Mt. 6: 33).

And if you ask for God for something and you must wait for a long time for that thing, for He doesn’t listen to you quickly, do not be sad. This is for you are not wiser than God is. That happens to you either because of you being unworthy of what you ask for, or because of not being your ways on the measure of what you are asking for, either because of you not having reached that measure you need for receiving that gift you are asking for<sup>289</sup>. This is because we must not ascend to great measures before time, so that the gift from God not to become useless to us because of us receiving it too early. This is because everything that is received easily, it will easily be lost. Each thing earned into the pain of the heart it will be guarded carefully.

Be thirsty for Christ, in order you to get drunk of His love<sup>290</sup>. Close your eyes from seeing the pleasant things of the world, in order you to be found worthy of God, so that His peace will reign within your heart. Restrain on yourself from the things which your eyes look at, in order you to be found worthy of the spiritual joy. If your deeds are unpleasant to God, do not ask God for glory, in order you not to be like a man tempting God. Let your payer be according to your living. This is for he who is tied to the earthly realities cannot ask for the heavenly realities; and it is impossible to him who occupied on himself with the earthly things to ask for the heavenly realities. This is for the desire of each man is shown by his deeds<sup>291</sup>. And one fight in his prayer for the things which he strives for. He who desire the big things he won’t occupy on himself with the small things.

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<sup>289</sup> In order you to receive the high knowledge that is given together with the love, you too must strive to reach the level of that knowledge through a bigger desire to Know God and to receive His love. Only our effort makes us to assimilate the gift from God.

<sup>290</sup> By this and by other words it is shown that Saint Isaac doesn’t strictly pursue the title of any of this *Words*. He placed in each of his words small and big things, so that he almost described in all of his *Words*, the stages of the spiritual life.

<sup>291</sup> The desire expressed by word, without any effort to accomplish it, it isn’t a serious desire.

Being tied with your body, you still be free and show your freedom of obeying Christ<sup>292</sup>. But you must also be wise in your gentleness, in order you not to be allowed to be stollen<sup>293</sup>. Love the humbleness in all your deeds in order you to be delivered from the difficult to be known traps, which always occur outside the path of them who are humble in thought. Do not avoid the troubles for though them you enter the knowledge of the truth<sup>294</sup>. And do not fear the souly temptations, but prepare yourself with the whole your power for the bodily trials. This is because without these ones you cannot advance towards God. This is for within them there is the godlike resting. He who runs away from temptations he runs away from virtues<sup>295</sup>. But, speaking about temptations, I do not speak about those of the lusts, but about those of the troubles (about trials)<sup>296</sup>.

**Question:** How can be reconciled the word “Pray not to enter the temptation” (Mt. 27: 41) with the word: “Do not fear them who kill the body” (Lk. 13: 14) and with the word: “he who has lost his soul for Me, he will find his soul” (Mt. 10: 28, 39)? How the Lord urges us everywhere to trials, and here He has commanded us not to enter them? What virtues is born without trouble and trials? Or, what trials is bigger than one to lose on himself and still the Lord commands us to receive that for Him? For “he who doesn’t take his cross, He says, to follow Me, he is not worthy of Me” (Mt. 10: 38). How then, after He commanded is throughout all His teaching to enter the trials, here he has

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<sup>292</sup> Our body doesn’t impede us from being free. We can choose to do through our body diverse deeds and we can guide our body to a good or to a bad living. Our body doesn’t represent a rigid, linear legality. Our body is the tool of our freedom. We are free from our body especially when we work for Christ, fulfilling His commandments. Otherwise, we shown on ourselves as mastered by our own body. Even our freedom increases or decreases in report with our body, depending on our will which we affirm or abdicate from it. Fulfilling the commandments of Christ it means a spiritualization of the body it means giving ever more power and place to the freedom within our body. Obeying Christ is an act of freedom, of will. The bigger the obedience to Christ is, the more the freedom will be affirmed.

<sup>293</sup> He who is gentle can be deceived, stollen, and enslaved by the cunning ones because of his gentleness. He could be insufficiently attentive to the temptations coming upon him.

<sup>294</sup> Out of troubles you will know your helplessness and your shortcomings, and your dependency on God; out of troubles you will learn the humbleness.

<sup>295</sup> This is because he who runs away from temptations, he runs away from fighting them, a fight which he achieves the virtue through. (In our opinion this directly contravenes to our Lord Christ Jesus’ prayer: “Lead us not into temptation” (E. l. t.’s n.))

<sup>296</sup> In Greek there is the same word for the temptations coming from the lusts and for the temptations coming through troubles (πειρασμοί).

commanded us not to enter the trials? “For through many trials you must enter the Kingdom of Heavens” (Jn. 16: 33); and: “In the world you will have troubles”; and: “In enduring them you will gain your souls” (Lk. 21: 14).

Oh, what subtle is the way of Yours teachings, Lord! Because of that, the wiseman and he who doesn't read with knowledge will always be outside the knowledge. When the sons of Zebediah and their mother wanted to have a chair with You in the Kingdom, You told them: “Can you drink the cup of the trials which I will be baptized with?” (Mt. 20: 22). And then, how do you command us, Master, not to enter the temptations? What temptations You command us about, us not to enter them?

**Answer:** Pray, he says, not to enter those temptations referring to faith, pray not to enter the temptations of the mind- self-appreciation, accompanied by the evils of the blasphemy and of the pride. Pray not to enter, because of being forsaken by God, the obvious temptation of the devil by the evil memories coming into your thought, which we have been forsaken for. Pray not to get far from you the angel of the righteousness, because otherwise you will be warred by the fiery war of the sin and you will part with the angel. Pray not to enter the temptation of being enticed from somebody against somebody else, or the temptation of the doubt and of the hesitation, which the soul is forcedly pushed by into the great battle.

But prepare yourself to accept the trials of the body with the whole your soul and float in those with all your limbs and fill your eyes up with tears, in order your guardian angel not to get far from you. This is for outside the trials there is not shown the taking-of-care from God, and one cannot learn the wisdom of the Ghost, neither the longing for God will be shown as strengthened within the soul. This is because before trials the man prays to God as to a stranger. But when the man enters the trials for his love for Christ but he still doesn't receive change, that man has God as a debtor and he will be reckoned at God as a true son. This is for he warred his enemy and he defeated his enemy for the will of God<sup>297</sup>.

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<sup>297</sup> He has God as a debtor for God, by letting him into trials, God showed him that He takes care of him, that He has him to His heart, that He wants to spiritually raise him up. But by that God also obliges on Himself to help him when his troubles are too big. And he who has been

“Pray not to enter the temptations” means this: pray not to enter the fearsome house of the devil because of your pride, but because you love God, so that God’s power will help you and it will defeat your enemies within you. Pray not to enter these temptations because of the evilness of your thoughts and deeds, but in order your love for God to be proven and His power to be glorified into your patience. His to be the glory and the mastery forever and ever. Amen!

## Word XLV

### **About the Mercy of the Master, which He Descended through, from the Height of His Glory, to the Helplessness of the People; and about Trials**

But our Lord, by showing you His taking-of-care, according to the way of His mercy and according to the measure of His grace, he commanded us, if you notice it well, also to pray for the bodily trials. This is for He saw our weak nature, because of our earthly body submitted to rotting, and that our body cannot resist the trials when reaching in their middle, and that’s why it falls off the truth and it runs away and it is defeated by troubles, so that he commanded us to pray in order us not to unexpectedly fall into trials, if it is possible us to be pleasant to God without those. But if the man, due to a very great virtue, he suddenly falls into fearsome trials but he didn’t suffer those, he won’t be either able to fulfill that virtue at that time.

We must not pretend either to ourselves or to others. Neither must we leave our chosen state and our good thing, which our life is enriched through like a treasury, and to give us diverse excuses and ground for drowsiness, as for instance that commandment that we must pray not to enter the temptation<sup>298</sup>. This is because about these ones has been said

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fighting the trials he has been fulfilling the will of God out of his love for God, and as a son of God wanting to grow up as God wants him to. In this overcoming of the trials, he felt within him the power of God. So, it is not about a juridical duty of God.

<sup>298</sup> Some people invoke as an excuse the fact that they haven’t resisted some temptation because we couldn’t do it, and that’s why our Lord commanded us to pray not to fall into

that, because of the commandment they sin hiddenly. So, if it happens to the man that a temptation comes upon him and he transgresses a commandment because of that, namely he forsakes the righteousness, or the monastic living, or he denies the faith, or he doesn't live in asceticism for Christ, because he has got scarred and because he hasn't been manly fighting the temptations, he will have fallen off the truth.

Therefore, let's despise our body with the whole our power, and let's surrender our soul to God and let's enter the fight with the temptations in the name of the Lord. And He Who has delivered Joseph out of Egypt and He showed Joseph as image and example of the righteousness and He Who guarded Daniel unharmed in the lions' pit and He Who kept unharmed the three young men in the hot oven and He Who took Jeremiah out of the mud pit and He Who granted him mercy and Who took Peter out from prison through the locked up doors and, to say it shortly, He who always and everywhere and in all countries He is together with His servants and He shows His power and victory and He guard them through many wonders and Who shows them His salvation in all their troubles, may Him strengthen us too and deliver us from the middle of the waves engulfing us up! Amen.

Let's therefore have zeal within our souls against the devil and against his servants, a zeal as that had by the Maccabees and by the Holy Prophets and by Apostles and by Martyrs and by the Pious and Righteous Fathers who kept the godlike laws and the commandments of the Ghost in fearsome places and in all-awful trials, and they cast the world and their bodies behind themselves, and they persevered in their righteousness while not allowing to be overcome either their bodies together with the souls, by the dangers surrounding them, but they overcome those manly; whose names have been written in the book of life until the second coming of Christ; and whose teaching has been preserved through the commandment of God towards our teaching and strengthening, as the blessed Apostle confesses (Rom. 15: 4), so that we to become wise and us to learn the

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temptation. Namely, he commanded us to do that because he knew that we cannot resist. So, if despite our prayer we have still reached into temptation, it won't be our guilt, but it will be our Lord to be blamed, because of not fulfilling our ask for not allowing us to reach into temptation. But we must fight the temptation and we must to be sure that in this fight of ours there is also His help.

ways of God and us to have under our eyes their stories and lives, so that we to walk their way and us to resemble to them.

How sweet are the godlike words to the all-wise soul! Like a good warming up the body. And how desired are the stories about the righteous ones to the ears of the gentle ones! As it is a ceaseless watering to the recently planted plant.

So, my beloved one, you think always at God's Providence, which He has been taking care of us through since the beginning and until now, as through a medicine for the weakened eyes, and you constantly keep within yourself the His remembrance. And think and take care and let yourself be advised by these ones, in order you to learn having within your soul remembrance of the honor of God you to find for your soul an eternal life into Christ Jesus our Lord; in Him Who has made on Himself the Mediator between God and people, as One Who has united on Himself with both of them, and Whose glory surrounding the throne of His glory the angels cannot get close to, but Who showed on Himself within world for us as having a poor and humble countenance, as Isaiah says: "I saw Him and He had neither face nor beauty" (Isa. 53: 2); in Him Who, by being unseen to the entire created nature, He has put on a body and He has consummated the oikonomia for the salvation and for the life of all nations who are cleaned up through Him. Whom is due the glory and the mastery forever and ever! Amen.

### Word XLVI

**About the Sort of the Diverse Trials and about how Much Sweetness Have within Them the Trials Coming upon Us and which We Endure for Truth. And about the Steps and the Kinds of Livings which the Wise Man Crosses through**

The virtues follow one after another, in order the way of the virtues not to be unpleasant or difficult; and also, because the virtues are achieved on at a time. And thus, the difficult deeds committed for good become pleasant as ones which strengthen one on another in good. This is for nobody will be able to really achieve the non-earning, if he doesn't persuade on himself to endure joyfully endure the trials. And nobody will be

able to endure the trials, except he who has believed that there is something superior to the bodily resting, the bodily resting being opposite to the troubles which he has prepared on himself to be partaker to, and which he is ready for receive.

So, within everyone who have prepared on themselves, there will move in the first place the love for troubles, and after it will occur within him the thought to become poor of this world. And everyone who want to come close to the trouble, he will firstly deprive on himself, by faith, of everything, and then he will come close to the troubles. But he who derives on himself of the material goods, but he doesn't deprive on himself of the work of his senses, namely of highs and of hearing, he will cause to himself a twofold trouble and he will be tormented and troubled in a twofold manner<sup>299</sup>. Better said, what doesn't he benefit of the fact that he deprives on himself of the things submitted to the senses, but he sweetens on himself with them through his senses"? This is for what he has been suffering before through the deeds related to them, he is still suffering that because of his passions for those things, because the memory of his habituation to those material things it is not removed from his cogitation. This is because if their hallucinations occurring into cogitation cause pain to the man, even in the absence of the things as such, what could we say about their close presence? Therefore, the withdrawal is good, for it helps very much. This is for the withdrawal tames manly the thoughts and it sows power of living and it teaches the man to endure, with much patience, the troubles necessarily coming out of this<sup>300</sup>.

Do not try to receive any advice from somebody who is not living your way of living, even if he would be very wise. You better unveil your thought to an illiterate man but who experienced the things you are preoccupied with, than to an

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<sup>299</sup> Not having some things but looking at them it is a twofold trouble: one consists of not having those things, and the other consists of desiring them. Desiring them makes not having them more tormenting than simply don't having them.

<sup>300</sup> We have here an illustration of the connection between trial and temptation: when you are deprived of some things you suffer because of a trial, of a trouble; when you have those things you suffer because of the temptation of using those things for pleasure. It is good when you make the temptation to pass into trial. The Romanian language has two words for these states: *încercare* (trial) and *ispită* (temptation). The Greek and the Slavonic languages have only one word for expressing this: *πειρασμός*, respectively *ispita* (Slavonic). But also in the Romanian language, given the fluid passing from a meaning to another, it is difficult to be always decide what of the two terms must be chosen in a certain context.

educated philosopher who speaks out of his readings without experiencing the things he speaks about. But what the experience is? The experience doesn't consist of somebody not receiving to look at certain things without knowing those things by himself, but it consists of limpidly feeling by experience those things' benefit of damage, by the fact that he has spent a long time experiencing them<sup>301</sup>. Often, a certain thing seems to be damaging, but within it, it has a fully beneficial work. You reckon the same regarding the opposite situations. Namely, often a certain thing seems to be useful, but it is full of damaging inside. That's why, many people are experiencing losses in the things seeming beneficial. But we don't receive either from these ones the true witness of the knowledge<sup>302</sup>. So, you use that adviser who knows to patiently probe the things which require a right-reckoning (a discernment). That's why, not everyone is worthy of being trusted when giving an advice, but only him who firstly has rightly organized his freedom and who does not fear to be blamed and gossiped.

So, when you find unchanged peace in your way, you must fear that, because you are far from the path which the tired feet of the saints walk on. This is because the surer you step on the way leading to the Kingdom of Heavens and the closer you get to the city of God, the more you will have as sign of that the strength of the trials you will encounter. And the more you get closer and the more you advance, the more trials against you will multiply. So, when you feel within your soul more diverse and stronger trials, you will know that your soul has hiddenly received at those times a higher state and a new grace has been added to the state which your soul has been in. This is for on the measure of the grace God will bring upon the soul the troubles of other trials. You won't understand by those the worldly trials happening to some people bridled the evilness

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<sup>301</sup> The true experience, therefore, it requires time, and it doesn't suffice a passing tasting of a certain situation. This shows us what price we have to put on the opinions of some theologians who occupy on themselves with the mysticism by "studying" it, but they haven't experienced the life into God by living it for a long time.

<sup>302</sup> Let's not receive advices either from them who, seeming as doing evil things, they accomplish good things, or vice versa, but let's receive advices from them who had a good life in the whole limpidness: from them who do the good by deeds which are shown as good (there can be here too some sort of applying the saying: "The purpose excuses the means"). But the text is going to say in continuation that neither these are deprived of gossips, of defamations. But an added sign of their kindness is the fact that they don't answer such gossips, but they keep their peace.



in the seen things, neither you will understand bodily troubles, but I mean trials matching the monks who appease on themselves, trials which we are going to analyze later<sup>303</sup>.

And if the soul suffers any weakness and therefore the soul cannot endure the big trials and the soul prays to God not to enter those, and if God listens to that soul, you must know that on that measure that God strengthen you for the big trials, on the same measure God will make you worthy of the great gifts. This is for God doesn't give a great gift without a big trial. This is for God has appointed the gifts according to the trials, according to His wisdom that cannot be understood by those who have been created by God. That's why, out of the grave troubles happening to you out of the taking-care from God, you will know how much honor your soul has received from God's glory. This is for according to measure of the sadness there will be also the comforting.

**Question:** Which is, therefore, in the first place: the trial and then the gift, or it is the gift and after it the trial?

**Answer:** The trial won't come, if the soul hasn't firstly received a glory over the soul's measure. It is the ghost of the grace that has been firstly received by the soul. About this bears witness the trial of the Lord and the trials of the apostles. This is because they weren't allowed to enter the trials until they received, in the first place, the comforting. This is for they who are imparted with the goods are due to suffer the trials for those goods. This is because after the good there will come the trouble for that good. So pleased God Him to do in all the things<sup>304</sup>.

But if it happens so, namely if the grace comes before the trial, though the feeling of the trials comes before the feeling of

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<sup>303</sup> It is not about trials happening to those monks who still are on the level of the doing because they restrain on themselves from evil deeds. Here it is about the bigger trials coming upon them who are in the higher stage of the appeasement. Neither these ones have an unchanged peace on their way. And it wouldn't be good if they had it. This is because if they had such an unchanged peace on their way, they wouldn't have any longer the occasion to strengthen their straining in their fight for guarding their quietude.

<sup>304</sup> This is applying the synergy to enduring the troubles. And an understanding of this synergy (of the together-working of the freedom with the grace), as a means of spiritual progress. The man, by giving his patience, he won't give it without having received the grace for that patience. And this inscribes a live of spiritual growth in his life. After enduring a trial with the help of a grace, there will come another even bigger trial based on a greater grace.

the grace, in order to prove the freedom. This is because never will the grace be shown within somebody before that somebody to taste the trials. So, the grace if the first to come within mind, but it is the second to be felt<sup>305</sup>. Therefore, we owe that during these trials to have two opposite feelings which totally differ from one another: these two are: the joy and the fear. The joy that you are walking the way trodden by the saints, or better said on that way walked by Him Who has given life to everyone. And this thing is proven by the knowledge (diagnosis) given you by trials. And we must have the fear too, lest because of our pride to be tempted by these ones<sup>306</sup>. But they who are humble in heart they will be made wise by the grace, in order they to be able to discern which is the temptation occurring as a fruit of the pride and which is that one occurring as a hit consequently to love<sup>307</sup>. This is for the trials out of deviation and out of increasing the living into good differ from the temptations coming out of that forsaking towards advising, for the haughtiness of the heart.

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<sup>305</sup> It is so in the case of the grace of the Holy Mysteries too. Firstly, the seen is hidden in the ground, and its fruit will be shown latter. The grace is given on a certain moment, but the grace's work is long and its effects are shown gradually. Although, even hidden like that, the grace is helping the man since the beginning of the trials to endure those trials, in the fight against the urges towards sin. We are noticing here the expression "the feeling of the grace" which followed to be reproached by Hausherr to Simeon the New Theologian. Simeon said that no one must expect to be saved if he doesn't reach the feeling of the grace. Saint Isaac conditions the feeling of the grace to the patience and to the overcoming of the troubles.

<sup>306</sup> Here is being made a clear difference between trials and temptations, but it is also shown the easy crossing from ones to others. The trials (πειρασμός) can become temptations to us (πειραζόμεθα εν τούτοις). As for most part of this writing, we have here too a majestic presentation of the contradictory complexity of the souly states. We must enjoy the trials (that what hurts us); and, in the same time, we must fear lest by being us sweetened only with the joy of the trial to fall into the temptation of the pride for the fact that we can endure those trials.

<sup>307</sup> That what occurs as a fruit of the pride is a temptation, but it can also be a trial (trouble); and that what occurs as a hit consequently to the love it is a trial, but it can also be a temptation. Only the discernment can distinguish when each of those consequences is either trial or temptation.

## **The Trials Coming upon the Friends of God Who Are Humble in Thought**

Those trials brought by the stick towards the soul's progress and growth, which is detached and probed through that soul that lives in ascesis, are these ones: the hesitation, the burdening of the body, the drowsiness of the limbs, the idleness, the confusion of the cogitation, the imagining of the body's weakness, the ceasing of the hope for a while, the darkening of the thoughts, the lack of a human help, the lack of the things needed for the body, and others like these ones. Out of these temptations the man will achieve a lonely soul and a killed and humble heart. And through these the soul will be tried if it starts desiring the Creator. That's why the Care-Taker appoints these ones towards the power and towards the need of those who receive them. In those trials are mixed the comforting and the sufferings, the light and the darkness, the wars and the aids and, shortly speaking, the narrowness and the broadness. They (if used well) are the sign of the man's progress by the help of God<sup>308</sup>.

## **The Temptation of the Enemies of God Who Are the Proud Ones**

And the temptations coming out of the forsaking by God, against them who are shameless and rise their thoughts in front of God's kindness and because they do injustice to this kindness by their pride<sup>309</sup>, are these ones: the shown temptations from the devils, which are at their turn above the

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<sup>308</sup> All of these have both the aspect of trials and of temptations. It depends on what they are used like: for exiting out of them towards God, or towards the total falling. The man's will gives them their last qualification. They are a scale placed in front of the man who must lean it on a side or another. Without them, namely without overcoming them, the man cannot advance towards God. That's why they are given on the measure of the level reached by the man, on the measure of the man's capacity of gaining through them.

<sup>309</sup> They do injustice to God's kindness because they use the gifts given them by this kindness to make them unpleasant to the people, so that the people will complain because God gave the proud ones, gifts used by them against their fellow humans.

limit of the soul's power<sup>310</sup>, the depravation of the wisdom's powers from withing them, the lightning feeling of the fornication's hallucination allowed against them in order to humble their haughtiness, the quick-getting-angry, the will of imposing their will, the will for quarreling by words, the will to rebuke, the despising of the heart, the total delusion of the mind, blasphemies against God, insane thoughts causing of laughter, or better said of crying, the fact of becoming laughing stock to the people and of losing their honor, and of becoming embarrassing and disgraceful to the people, through the work of the devils in many ways, hiddenly and plainly, the lust for getting mingled and living with the world, the lust for speaking and for speaking insanely and for always contriving some novelty through a liar prophecy, and for promising many things which are above their own power. And these ones are the souly trials and temptations.

And in the bodily trials and temptations occur to someone like this, painful happenings always persevering in intertwining with him and which are difficult to be undo, encounters with evil people and ungodly people; and it even happens to them to fell in the hands of people who torment him, and his heart always and suddenly shakes, without reason, because of the fear of God. These ones often suffer big falls off rocks and off high places; and other things like theses ones happening them and crushing their body. And, finally, the lack of them who could support his heart out of the power of God and the lack of the hop of their faith; and, shortly, as much helplessness is brought upon them together with the helplessness's things. All of these mentioned and listed by us belong to the sorts of the pride's temptations.

And the beginning of these ones occurs within man when he starts reckoning on himself as wise in his eyes. And such a man moves in evil things on the measure he accepts such thoughts of the pride.

Therefore, you will know out of the sorts of the temptations the ways of the frivolity of your cogitation. And if you see some of these trials mixed in the trials hinted before by

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<sup>310</sup> There are temptations from the devils which exceed the soul's resistance power, as there are also gifts from God which are above the man's natural power. While the last ones increase the soul's power, the first ones annul even that power had by the soul.

them, you will know that to the extent you have such trials you will also have the pride nesting into you.

### **About Patience**

Listen to another sort too. All the not endured hardships and the troubles have within them a twofold torment<sup>311</sup>. This is for the man's patience limits his troubles' burden. The lack of courage is the mother of the torment. And the patience is the mother of the comforting and it is a power that usually is born out of the heart's broadness. But this power is difficult to be found by the man while in troubles, without the godlike grace coming out of the pursuing of the prayer and out of the shedding of the tears.

### **About the Lack of Courage**

When God wants to trouble the man even more, God allows the man enter the hands of the lack of courage. And this gives birth within man to the strong power of the idleness, which the man tastes through a choking of his soul that is one with the tasting of the Gehenna. And out of this comes the ghost of the going out of minds<sup>312</sup>, out of which spring up tens

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<sup>311</sup> The patience is a spiritual strength that diminishes the strength of the troubles. By the fact that you don't endure them, you won't diminish them and you won't remove them. You will still endure them because you cannot do otherwise. But enduring them without patience it will be harder in a twofold manner. The more you endure the troubles willingly, the more you make an effort that diminishes their power; the more you are impatient in your troubles the more you will increase them and they will seem unbearable to you, limitless, and impossible to master them by your power. The troubles occurring to you, it will seem to you as limitless when you do not endure it, but if you endure it patiently you will limit it and you will master it, for within your patience there is the power of God that limits your trouble. You actually feel God's power what it limits you trouble like. This too is a form of synergy: the more you strain on yourself into your patience the more the power of God will help you to overcome your trouble. This is what Saint Isaac is going to say in continuation.

<sup>312</sup> The lack of courage is one with the increase of the idleness, as renunciation to the efforts of enduring the troubles. But that increases the troubles up to the proportions of a torment in hell. This is the limitlessness of the hell having in it also a subjective element. This leads to despair and to a true getting out of minds. This is because there is a kinship between the getting out of minds, the desperation, and the sentiment that the burden and the pain have no limits. In all of these there is a lack of understanding of the limited reality of the trouble; it is a subjective stretch of the darkness to infinite. Thus, the despair and the hell are connected by

of thousands of temptations: the confusion, the wrath, the blasphemy, the defamation, the twisted thoughts, the moving from a place to another, and other things like these ones. And if you ask which their cause is, I will answer you: the carelessness. The medicine for all of these is one. And taking this medicine one will immediately find the comforting for his soul. And which that medicine is? It is the humble cogitation of the heart. Without these ones, no one can tear down the wall of these evil things, but he rather will make them overwhelming him<sup>313</sup>.

Do not be mad with me because I am telling you the truth. I am telling you the truth for you have been searching for it within your soul. But if you want to, you enter the truth's country and you will see how the truth will untie you from your evilness. This is for on the measure of your humble cogitation you will be given the patience too in your troubles<sup>314</sup>. And according to your patience will also be lightened the heaviness of your troubles and you will achieve comforting. And according to your comforting, it will increase your love for God. And according to your love for God, there will be born your joy into the Holy Ghost. Still, on them who are truly sons, the All-Merciful doesn't want to get them out of their trials, neither He delivers them from their trials, but He dresses them up in patience for enduring those troubles. And they receive all these goods in the hand of their patience, towards the consummation

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the weakening of the will to endure and by the wakening up of the will, by the absence of the godlike grace.

<sup>313</sup> The humble cogitation, by being an admission of the self-limitation by knowing the endlessness of the godlike power, it allows the human being to see by that also the limitation of the troubles and it makes the human being able to accept the troubles. That's why, where the humble cogitation is there cannot be the hell of the seemed limitlessness of the troubles and of the passions which are the troubles' causes. Where it is seen the God's limitlessness, there no longer could be lived another limitlessness, namely that of the hell. Through this humble cogitation that has the evidence of the limitlessness of God, we limit also the pains which can be caused to us by the closeness of our death and it might be that we also could limit the unlimited death's consequences. And as through the subjective increasing of the pains we give them also some sort of real increasing to us, likewise, by subjectively limiting the consequences of our death we limit them in an objective mode too.

<sup>314</sup> It is to be noticed the paradox that the humbleness, that is self-limitation and that seems to be effortless, it implied the greatest effort, and therefore also the power to endure the troubles, to limit the troubles, by the evidence of the limitlessness of the godlike power which one experiences.

of their souls<sup>315</sup>. May Christ, our God, by His grace, to make us worthy of enduring the evils for His love, into the thanksgiving of our heart! Amen.

## **Word XLVII**

### **That Body that Fears the Trials Will Become Friends with the Sin**

Someone among the saints said that that body that fears the trials it will make friend with the sin, in order not to suffer and to avoid dying. But just because of that the Holy Ghost forced him to die. For He knows that if he doesn't die, he won't be able to defeat the sin. Thus, if somebody wants the Lord to dwell within him, he will force his body and he will serve (liturgize) the Lord and he will make on himself the Lord's servant by fulfilling the commandments of the Ghost as written by the apostle, and he will guard his soul against the deeds of the flesh which the apostle wrote about. This is for only when he weakens his body by fasting and humbleness, the soul will be strengthened by prayers. This is because when the body is narrowed in many sorts of troubles and needs in its quietude, the more the body gets closer to the death (it is mortified) in its life, the body uses to beg you, by telling you: "Be a little more lenient to me, so that I can live more temperately<sup>316</sup>. For I am now walking uprightly for I have been tested in such sort of evil things". But when you rest your body from troubles and when you give your body a little mercy, for you have suffered together with your body, and when your body gets rested even only for a little while, it will whisper you, while flattering you a little<sup>317</sup>, until your body will make you get out of wilderness (because of its flattering is very powerful). And your body tells you: "We can live appropriately also near to the world. This is because we have been tested much. So, we can remain within the things

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<sup>315</sup> God doesn't spare of troubled the beloved ones of His, because without troubles they won't progress in the virtue of patience and of humbleness. But by giving them troubles, God gives them also the power to endure those troubles and to become humble.

<sup>316</sup> I not to live so restrained, so deprived, and so harshly.

<sup>317</sup> It flatters you by saying you that you have progressed much, so that you can give your body a little resting.

which we have reached into. Just test me and if I am not as you wish, we could turn back here. This is because the wilderness doesn't go anywhere". But you must not trust your body, regardless how much it will beg you and no matter how many promises it will make to you. This is because the body doesn't accomplish what it says. After you have accomplished your body's request, your body will throw you in big falls, out of which you won't be able to get up and go out.

When you get lazy while facing temptations, and when you have got tired of them, you tell your body: "Do you want again your uncleanness and defiled life". And if your body tell you: "It is a sin to commit suicide", you answer your body: "I am killing myself for me<sup>318</sup>, for I do not want to live in uncleanness. I am dying here, in order I not to see the true death of my soul, that death coming from God<sup>319</sup>. It is beneficial to me if I die here for cleanness and not to live the life from within world. I have chosen this willing death for my sins. I am killing on myself because I have committed sin to the Lord, and for I no longer want to anger Him. Why would I want to live a life far from God? I endure these troubles in order I not to get fat from the heavenly hope. What good will be to God my life from here, if I live it in a bad manner and if I anger Him?"

## **Word XLVIII**

### **What is the Reason why God Allowed the Trials to Them Who Love Him**

Out of the love shown to God by the saints, they suffer the trials coming upon them, for the name of God, for God doesn't get far from them who love Him and their heart gains daring to see Him in an unveiled manner and to ask Him for the things they need, with trust. This is for great is the power of that prayer uttered with daring. That's why God allowed His

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<sup>318</sup> I am mortifying on myself, or I am killing the evil lusts.

<sup>319</sup> The true death that is the separation from God. That death that doesn't separate us from God is not a true death but it bears us towards life. And the separation from God is the deed of the man. That's why not God made the death. But God accepts the death of the lusts, the death of the egotism, the death of the death. This is for such a death is the way towards the true life, that live into God.



saints to be trialed in all sorts of trials, in order they to receive again the experience and the proof of His help and in order they to see how much taking-or-care God has of them. But also, in order they to gain wisdom out of trials and they not to remain untaught and so to be deprived of the gain of both parts of the habituation. This is for they gain thus, by trial, the knowledge of all things and thus they won't reach to be the mockery of the devils. This is because if they were accustomed only to the good things, and if they were unaccustomed to the other habituation<sup>320</sup>, they would lack the experience in wars.

And if we said through this that God accustomed them without giving them any knowledge, we would say that God wants them to be like oxen and like donkeys and like those having not freedom in certain things<sup>321</sup>. But the man won't taste the good if not probed, firstly, by trying the evil things. This is for, when the man encounters the good within them, him to use them through knowledge and freedom, as his own<sup>322</sup>. What sweet is like that knowledge gained out of the experience by tasting the things, and how much power it gives him who has found it out by his rich experience, it is a known thing them who have been entrusted about that and who have felt its help, as it is also known to them the weakness of the nature and the fact that the human nature is supported by the godlike power. This is for then they know that God, by stopping firstly His help from reaching them, He will make them feeling the weakness of their nature and the cunningness of their enemy; and He makes them know whom they must fight with and which nature they have put on and what they are guarded like by the godlike power; and how far they have traveled and how high they have ascended on it; and how they get weakened while facing any passion when the godlike power is removed from them. And this

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<sup>320</sup> Getting accustomed to enduring the troubles.

<sup>321</sup> So, the people, by having understanding and by not being like the animals are, they can be a meaning also in the troubled coming upon them. The people do not get accustomed to endure the troubles in a simple manner, without gaining out of them a certain experience, a knowledge, or without drawing any conclusion out of those troubles. This is one more reason why the people accept the troubles freely, and not like the animals which endure the troubles in lack of freedom in order to gain a skill because of being driven and forced by the will of their master.

<sup>322</sup> Even into troubles, the man could encounter the good if he uses the troubles through freedom and knowledge, towards doing the good. The troubles are given to him, for he can use them through knowledge and freedom. The troubles broaden his knowledge and they also make the man spiritually progressing, and to freely avoid the evil.

is for they to gain humbleness out of all of those and they to travel towards God and they to wait for His help and they to persevere in prayer.

And where will they have learnt all of these if they haven't gained the experience by enduring the many evil things, which they have reached in by the lenience of God? This is for the Apostle says: "In order I not to get haughty because of the overwhelming greatness of the unveilings, it has been given to me as a bold in my body, the angel of satan" (2 Cor. 12: 7). But somebody also gains steadfast faith out of trials by experiencing the help from God with he has been receiving it for many times. By that he will become fearless and he will gain courage out of trials and out of the achieved experience.

The trial is useful to any man. This is for, if the trial is useful to Paul, then all the people must shut up their mouth and they must feel indebted to God to accept the trials. This is for they who live in ascesis they are tried in order their richness to increase; the lazy, in order they to guard on themselves against the things harming them; the sleepy, in order they to be urged to wake up; they who are far, in order to come close to God; the household, in order they not to enter the house daringly. No inexperienced son will receive the richness of his father's house before he is able to use that richness. That's why God tries them firstly and He submits them to hardships, and only then He will show them the gift. Glory to our Master Who by bitter medicines brings us to delectation into health!

There is nobody not to get sad during the trials' times (getting experience). And there I no one whom the gall not to seem bitter to, at the time he drinks the gall during his trials. This is because without this, nobody can reach to drink the strong beverage. But enduring is not in our power. This is for, how could the clay vessel hold the flowing water without being strengthened in the first place by the godlike fire? We are going to take all the things into Christ Jesus, our Lord, if we obey Him and if we ask for those things into humbleness, with a ceaseless desire. Amen.

## Word XLIX

**About the Dispassionate Knowledge and about Many Trials.  
About the Sure Knowledge that not Only the Small and the  
Weak and the Inexperienced, but also Them Who are Found  
Worthy for a Long Tien of Dispassion and Who Have  
Reached the Consummation of Their Thought and, Partially  
Near to the Cleanness United with the Mortification, They  
Are Mercifully Forsaken, because of Thei Falling into  
Pride<sup>323</sup>**

Some people mistake yet and again, but they heal their soul and the grace welcomes them again. This is for withing each speaking nature there takes place a change that doesn't reach the end. And the changes cross each man through all the moments of his life and out of the multitude of the changes the endowed one will know the grace, with the gift of the discernment. Buy the tests which he is submitted to on every day, they will make him wiser, especially if he is awake and if he takes heed at himself with his mind and if he find out how much change of his gentleness and of his kindness he receives in his soul on every day and how he is suddenly moved from peace to disturbance despite the circumstance he is in it doesn't give him any reason for that and how he ends being in a great and untold danger.

And this is what Saint Makarios wrote plainly, with much care and zeal, toward the remembrance and the learning of the brothers that, at the time of changing from a good state to the opposite state they not to fall into despair. This is for them who are on the level of the cleanness always experience falls, like the air happens to get colder, even sometimes they to be in idleness of in drowsiness; and even when they behave according to their rule, they could experience falls resisting the purpose of their will.

But also, the Blessed Mark bears witness about this, as one who experienced it as such, and he says in in his writing about an abundant strengthening, in order somebody not to

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<sup>323</sup> Almost all the spiritual fathers spoke about the advising forsaking by God of them who trust their own virtues, in order they to be brought back to humbleness. Saint Isaac the Syrian is specifying here that God forsakes us mercifully. It is like in the case of a mother sending her child to do some harder jobs, in order the child to become habituated, but she will follow the child's efforts with mercy.

reckon that Saint Makarios said this in his epistle<sup>324</sup> haphazardly and by truly experiencing it, as also through two so important witnesses the mind to receive, in a doubtless manner, comforting in time of need. So, what does he say? “There take place changes in each one, as in air too”. Do you understand what does he mean by the word “in each one”? This is because the nature is one, so that you won’t reckon that he spoke only about them who are on lower levels and unimportant, while the consummate ones would be free of change and they would stay undisturbed on their level, without having passionate thoughts, as the Evhivites<sup>325</sup> say. That’s why he wrote: “in each one”.

But how can that happen, oh, Makarios? You speak about fresh air, and then, after a while, you speak about heat and hails, or about war and clear sky. Actually, in our struggle it happens like so: the war, and then the help from the grace. This is for, at a time, our soul is in a storm and furious waves rise against our soul. And then it comes again a change. This is for the grace visits us and it fill up our heart with joy, with peace, and with God, and with righteous and peaceful thoughts. He is showing here these thoughts of the righteousness, letting us to understand that the previous thoughts were beastly and unclean; and he is urging us by telling us that, after these righteous and good thoughts it will follow the rushing in of other thoughts, but we mustn’t despair, and in the time of our resting brought us by the grace let’s not get haughty, but in the time of joy let’s wait for trouble.

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<sup>324</sup> I think that this is about “The Great Epistle” written by Makarios, and published by Werner Jaeger, in: *Two Rediscovered Works of Ancient Literature of Gregory of Nyssa and Makarios*, Leiden. E. I. Brill, 1954.

<sup>325</sup> Evhivites (the ones who pray) it is a Greek name given to Messalians, a heresy manifested in the Century IV and thereafter. “They said that the baptism is useless to them who receive it. The baptism cuts off like a razor the wheatears of their sins but not the root of their sins. But the consummate prayer plucks off the root of the sin too, and it banishes the devils from within soul. This is for each man is born since the beginning tied to a demon that moves the man to the inappropriate deeds. This devil cannot be cast out of the soul neither by baptism nor by something else, but only by the work of the prayer”. Once they have cast the devil out by prayer, they will no longer be able to commit sin, and they will even see, in a sensitive manner, the Persons of the Holy Trinity. Here Saint Isaac is showing Makarios affirming that each soul, including the more spiritually advanced souls, it is submitted to temptations, so that Makarios was an adversary to the Messalians, contrary to some affirmations belonging to some newer western theologians that Makarios, according to his writings, would have been a member of the Messalians’ heresy.

He urges us not to get sad, if there follow falls; he doesn't tell us not to stand against those falls, but he tells us to be with joy, by showing that our mind must receive these falls too as being ours. Let's not fall into despair, as one who has been waiting for something above the fight and for a consummate and unchanged resting and who doesn't want to receive fight and sadness, neither he wants to occur within him, in this world, the movement of something opposed to these ones, or something among the things unpleasant to God.

And he advised us this, in order us not to become totally unworking and with this thought us to get drowsy because of the despair and us not to remain steadfast on our way. And he says: "You know that all the saints were in this work. As long as we are in this world, together with these ones we are hiddenly given also an abundant comforting. This is for we are being requested on each day and on each hour a testing of our love for God, while fighting and waging war to the temptations. This means that we must not get sad and that we mustn't get lazy in battle. And so, we must walk our way. And he who wants to get our and to deviate from this path he will make himself prey to the wolves".

Of, what a wonder we can see at this saint! What he has made like, out of a small word, such a utilization, and he showed this one as full of wisdom and he totally removed the doubt of the reader. And that one, he says, who deviated from these and who makes on himself as prey to the wolves, he doesn't want to walk the due way. That one has made his mind to do so and who wants to walk a path untrodden by the fathers".

And when he asks us that at the time of the grace we should wait for troubles, he teaches us as in the following: out of the work of the grace it happens to occur within us great thoughts and kidnappings during the time of some sight (contemplation) of the mind that is above-nature, as Saint Mark said. This is for when the angels come close to us, they will fill us up with a spiritual view (contemplation). And all the opposite things will get far from us and, during the time that one experiences these things, and untold peace and serenity will occur within him. This is for then you are overshadowed by the grace and the holy angels come closer to you surrounding you as a wall, and by that all the ones who were tempting you they get far from you.

But you must not get haughty and you must not reckon in your soul that you have reached the peaceful shore and the unchanged sky and that you have been brought out of this bosom (of sea), and out of the opposite winds from it, and you no longer have to fear your enemies or to fear any evil encounter. This is because of many who thought that hell into danger, as the blesses Nilus said. Or, you mustn't reckon on yourself that you are greater than the many and that it is due to you to be in these things, and other do not deserve it because of their lagging behind in their living, or because of their unsatisfactory knowledge. You mustn't say: "That's why they are deprived of these things, and I am in what is due to me, for I have reached the consummation of the holiness and the spiritual level and the unchanged joy". You must rather remember your unclean thoughts and your inappropriate imaginings, brought within your cogitation in time of storm and at the hour of the disturbance and of the disorder of the thoughts, which, a little earlier, their rose against you in the fumbling of the darkness. You must remember how you have quickly deviated towards passions and how you have been taking to them in the darkness of the cogitation and how you haven't been sweetened, neither have you been wondering about the godlike view and about the abundance of the gifts received by you. And you must know that all of these have been brought upon us by the taking-of-care of God, in order to humble us. This is for God's taking-of-care it takes care and is appoints to each of us what is useful to him. That's why, when you get pride out of the received gifts, the God's taking-of-care will forsake you and you will totally fall into temptations, which, by thoughts; you are only tempted to.

Therefore, you must know that being into these things it doesn't depend on you, neither on your virtue, but it depends on the grace carrying you on the palm of its hands so that you won't be scared. You must think at these things when, during your joy, your thoughts get haughty, as our holy father said, and you cry and shed tears and lean yourself towards the memories of your sins, of those sins from the time of your forsaking, in order you to be delivered from this thought and you to gain through that your humbleness. Still, you must not despair, for through the thoughts of the humbleness you achieve, as through an expiation, the forgiveness of your sins.

This is for the humbleness brings us, even without deeds, the forgiveness of many of our sins. And the deeds without humbleness are, a contrary, useless. And they even prepare us for many evil things<sup>326</sup>. Therefore, you must, as I said, to achieve by humbleness the forgiveness of your lawlessness. Like the salt must be in any meal, likewise must be your humbleness in any of your virtue. And the humbleness can crush the power of many sins.

Therefore, we need to ceaselessly be sad in our thought, into humbleness and with the sadness of the right-reckoning (of a true discernment)<sup>327</sup>. This is for, if we have achieved this one, it will make us sons of God and it will present us in front of God, even without having us done good deeds. And without it (without humbleness), all our deed would be vain, as also all our virtues and works.

So, God wants the change of our cogitation. This is for through cogitation we can better us up, while also through cogitation we become evil. It suffices our cogitation to stay alone and non-helped (by deeds) before God and it to speak for us. You give thanks and confess on yourself to God, not being silent even for a moment, by thinking that by having such a helpless and easy to deviate towards evil nature, you still are from time to time elevated and which gifts are you found worthy of and who is elevating you above-nature; and when you are forsaken, where you descend to, so that you reach having a beastly mind. And you must think at the wickedness of your nature and at the quickness of the change that follows, as some among the old saints said: "When it comes to you, he says, the thought of the pride, telling you: think at your virtues, you will answer: old man, look at your fornication". He spoke about that fornication which you have been tempted by, during your forsaking, into your thoughts.

Lo what the grace appoints like, to each one according to his benefit, either during wartime or during the receiving of

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<sup>326</sup> The humbleness comprises in itself more than the deeds do. This is for, if the true deeds suppose the love and the honoring of your neighbor, he who has humbleness he has the roots of the good deeds, while the deeds of him who lack his humbleness are actually done for himself and only apparently for another. But through humbleness you have already surpassed even the evil deeds you did. This is for in itself the root of your being you have got accustomed to the good deeds.

<sup>327</sup> We must notice the subtlest sins, even those difficult to be noticed when superficially looked at.

help. Have you seen this wonderful old man how easily he told this thing? “When it comes to you, he says, the thought of the pride for the height of your living, you will answer: old man, look at your fornication”. It is obvious that the old man told that to a great man. This is because cannot be troubles by such a thought except those who are on a higher level and who live a worthy to be praised living. You can find out the fact that such a passion raises into the soul after achieving some virtue, in order the man to be disrobed of that virtue’s work, if you will, form an epistle of the same Makarios. Out of this epistle you can find out what stage are the saints and which are the temptations allowed to come upon them. This is for in the epistle are written the followings:

Abba Makarios writes to all his beloved sons, in order to teach them limpidly how they are guided by God through wars and through the support from the grace. This is for though them the wisdom of God liked to accustom the saints, from ever, against the sin, through virtue, as long as the saints still are in this life. This is for on each moment their sight to be raised towards looking at Him, and by ceaselessly looking at Him to grow up within them the holy love for Him, by that that they, by forcing on themselves to get out from under the oppression of the passions and out of the fear of them, they to run towards Him and they to get strengthened in their faith and in their hope and in their love for Him.

These things have been said not to them who live together with the people, and who move on themselves from place to place, and who always remain in the defiled and unclean thoughts and things; neither have been told these to them who fulfill the righteousness through deeds outside the quietude, and who are constantly hunted through their senses; neither to them who are constantly endangered by their needs, and whom are deprived - by the diverse circumstance which they willingly reach in - not only of their power for fully guarding their thoughts, but also by the power for guarding their senses. But these things have been told to them who are able to guard their bodies and their thoughts and who consummately shun on themselves against disturbance and against meeting people, and who, by the blessed circumstance that they have rejected all the things and even their own souls, they can guard their mind in prayer and they receive changes in their guiding by the grace, inside their peaceful life; to them



who live their lives under the arm of the knowledge of the Lord, being they hiddenly made wiser by the Ghost hidden into their appeasement and in their restraining from things and from seeing some of the things, as ones who have killed their thought regarding the world<sup>328</sup>. This is for these ones do not let the passions die. And the cogitation dies towards them through the restraint from things and through the together-working of the grace. May this grace guard us within the borders of this living! Amen.

## **Word L**

### **On the Same Theme and about Prayer**

The meaning of this chapter in brief, it is that we must that we need - on every moment, and on all the twenty-four hours of the day and of the night – the repentance. And the meaning of the name of the repentance, as I have known out of the true kind of the things, it is this: it is the ask prolonged for the entire time or the full-of-pricking prayer directed towards God for the forgiveness of the past sins and for guarding against sins in the future. That's why the Lord strengthened our weakness in prayer, saying: "Stay awake and take vigil and pray, not to enter the temptation" (Mt. 26: 41). You pray and you do not hesitate and take vigil all the time and pray. "Ask, and you will take. Search for and you will find. Knock and it will be opened to you. This is for everyone who asks for he will take, and he who searches for he will find and him who knocks it will be opened him" (Mt. 7: 7). But our Lord strengthened His word even more and he urged us to strive, in the parable of the friend who went to his friend in the middle of the night and asked him for bread, saying: "Amen, I say you, that if he didn't give him for their friendship, at least for his daring, he would get up and he would give him all the things he asked for" (Lk. 11: 8).

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<sup>328</sup> The killing of the cogitation regarding the world means no longer being interested in the world, for the world no longer tempts you with its pleasures which you know as inferior in comparison to the joy given to you by the communion with God.

So, yourself ask and do not get lazy. Of, untold daring! The Give entices us to ask from Him, in order Him to give us His godlike gifts. And as He bestows us all the things which are towards good to us, as He alone knows, likewise His words are full with the urge addressed us to dare and to trust Him. And for the Lord knows that our impulse towards deviation doesn't cease until our death and that this change is near to us – I mean that change from virtue to sin -, and that the man and his nature are always in state of deviation towards the opposite things, He urged us to strive and to ask and to ceaselessly toil<sup>329</sup>. This is for if this world had been the place of the strut and the man had reached it, his nature would have raised from under the pressure of the need, and his work would have existed from the pressure of the fear, and we wouldn't have been asked to pray, by fulfilling what we need through itself the God's taking-of-care<sup>330</sup>. This is for neither into the future age will be brought to God prayer asking for some things. This is for in that country of the freedom, our nature will no longer be submitted to change, neither will our nature deviate because of fearing the things opposite to itself. This is for our nature will be consummate in all aspects. That's why we must strive not only for prayer and for guarding, but also in order us to understand the subtle and non-understood movements happening to us, which are above the knowledge of our mind, and which often we are unwillingly in. This is because even if our cogitation is very sure and full of good will towards the good things, our cogitation often forsakes us at the border of the trials and God's taking-of-care throws us, as the Blessed Paul said: "In order I not to get haughty, for the overwhelming greatness of the unveilings, it has been given to me as a bold of my body the angel of the satan, to hit me. And I begged the Lord, for three

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<sup>329</sup> Our changing nature urges us ceaselessly towards deviations from the good way. By knowing this weakness of our nature, God forgives us ceaselessly, but He also urges us to as Him for forgiveness and for His help. The fixism of our nature into good, as argued by some old heresies and by some Christian denominations from today, it doesn't correspond to the reality.

<sup>330</sup> Even if our thought is full of benevolence towards the good things, sometimes we no longer understand the purpose of some of the trials, or our benevolence forsakes us at the border of those trials (when these trials start) and, in a way, the God's taking-of-care let us in their hands (throws us), though, in the end, God will help us exit the trials. Or, the work of God with us brings is fruits through our helplessness shows in the difficulty which we endure the trials with, because they are very big. Then we shout out increasingly louder toward God and we open the gate of our soul towards receiving His help.

times, to take him away from me. And the Lord told me: My grace is enough to you. This if for My power makes perfect into helplessness" (2 Cor. 12: 7)<sup>331</sup>.

Therefore, Lord, this is Your will and my childhood needs all of these, in order to be guided and wakened up by You, especially while the man is not drunk with your longing, for I am neither, and so the man is unattracted by Your goods insomuch that the man no longer to see the world because of his drunkenness he has of You<sup>332</sup>. For You have made me to ascend to this state and even higher, towards unveilings and views which cannot be expressed by the bodily tongue and which are seen and the voice of the liturgy of the ghosts is heard and I to be found worthy of the full of holiness Your sight<sup>333</sup>. But, for now, the consummate one into Christ, I am not able to guard on myself, right because I am something and because I have a subtlety; this if for I am not able to understand on myself, through my power, I who I have received the mind of Christ<sup>334</sup>.

Therefore, Lord, for that I rejoice of weaknesses, of troubles, of prisons, of ties, of needs, either from the part of my nature, or from the sons of the nature, either of those coming from my enemies. I endure while rejoicing of my helplessness, namely of my trials, in order the power of God to dwell within me (2 Cor. 12: 9). Id, after all of these I need the stick of the temptations, in order Your dwelling to increase even more within me by that, I will know out of these that You do not love anyone more than me, for You have glorified me by this more than on many; and You have given me to know Your wonderful

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<sup>331</sup> If we live into the certitude of seeing God, in openly experiencing Him, we wouldn't need to strengthen on ourselves, in this certitude, by asks. We would be convinced about the generous kindness of God only by "seeing" Him. That's why, in the age to come, we will praise only on God and we will thank Him, but we won't ask Him for anything anymore.

<sup>332</sup> One must notice this feature of the drunkenness of God: it is too a non-seeing of the surrounding world.

<sup>333</sup> The liturgy of the ghosts is the angelic liturgy, the angels' ceaseless praising addressed to God, and the sight of God is full of holiness. Or of cleanness, as God is all-clean or saint. Only the clean one sees God, or God irradiates His cleanness in him who sees Him.

<sup>334</sup> The higher I am elevated through Christ, the less I will understand on myself. I have objectively achieved the mind of Christ and I am a consummate man into Christ, but what it is objectively given to me I am not able to understand yet, right because that is such a high state. So, I am not yet able to understand either the purpose of these trials coming upon me right for consolidating me in this high state. This can be the meaning of this text, though it seems a little obscure to us.

and glorified powers, as to one of the apostles<sup>335</sup>, as You haven't given to others among my companions, and You have called me as "vessel of the understanding", in order I to faithfully guard the level of Your love. For all of these, I know that for advancing and progressing in the work of the preaching, I would have untied me of the chain of the trials and so You would have bestowed me my freedom, it that had been useful to me. But You haven't deigned I to be without trouble, neither I to be worriless in this world. This is for You haven't wanted even the work of preaching that Gospel to be multiplied within the world nor that You wanted I to benefit of my trials and my soul to be guarded healthy near to You<sup>336</sup>.

So, you can see, you who have achieved right-reckoning (discernment) that great is the gift of the trials. This is because the higher the man gets and enters the spiritual stage, in the likeness of Paul, the more he needs fear and guarding and he gathers up benefits out of the encounters with the trials. Who has reached the country of the entrustment that is full of robbers and he received the power not to deviate? (This is a thing not given either to the angels in order they not to become consummate without us)<sup>337</sup>. Who, by reaching there, he has received this gift against all spiritual and bodily gifts, in order him to remain totally unchanged and no temptations of the thought to come closer to him anymore? The order of this world has a meaning shown in all the Scriptures: even if we experienced thousands of falls and of wounds daily, let's not get

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<sup>335</sup> As to Paul. This phrase too is a little obscure. In the Greek text sound like: "And as You have given me to know Your wonderful and glorified powers, You didn't give to one among the apostles, my friends" etc.

<sup>336</sup> This phrase seems quite obscure. I think that the meaning would be this: God doesn't reckon more useful Him to be preached within the world, by unproven and unclean through trials men, than a previous consummation through trials. Only then the preaching of the believers would have a true effect. That's why he says: "For through these trials I to be guarded healthy next to You and thus to be made more fruitful Your preaching within the world".

<sup>337</sup> The more one get strengthened in his entrustment that he had progressed in the closeness of God, the more the assaults of the evil ghosts are more persisting. But, also in rejecting these ones we enjoy more the help from the angels. Thus, the angels themselves progress together with us into consummation, by fighting, at their turn, together with us, against the evil attacks. If the angels themselves had been submitted to such attacks and the must fight to reject those attacks by themselves, they would have ascended towards God without us. But it hasn't been given to them to ascend without us, without helping us. Besides, one could say that this is a general rule. No man can ascend towards God (towards good) without helping others to ascend too, and if, at his turn, he is not helped by others.

discouraged and let's not leave the race in the stadium. This is for it is possible that, through a small fight, us to gain the victory and to receive the crown.

This world is a battle place and it is a stadium for racing. And this time is a battle time. And in the battle place there is no law<sup>338</sup>. Namly, the emperor won't establish a limit to his soldiers until the battle is finished and until each man reaches at the door of the Emperor of the emperors and until is proved there who endured in the battle and has let himself not to be defeated and hasn't run. This is for, on how many times there is a man who seemingly is not useful to anyone, and he is always pushed aside because of being inexperienced, but still, while being helpless, he steals the flag from the hands of the army of the giant sons and he raises his name and he is praised more than all of them who fight and who are famous for their victories and he receives the crown and the precious gift more than his companions? That's why no man must remain into despair. Let's not get lazy at prayer and let's not hesitate in asking Him for help.

And let's place this in our thought that, as long as we are in the world and allowed into body, even if we will be elevated up to the top (apse) of the heavens, we must not be without deeds and toil and care. Through this comes the consummation. Forgive me! And what is more than this is reckless occupation. And to our God is due the glory and the mastery forever! Amen.

## **Word LI**

### **About the Diverse Sorts of the War from the Devil Against Them Who Walks the Narrow Path, that One that Is Above-World**

It is an old custom of the devil, of our enemy, to skillfully divide his attacks against them who enter this battle, according to the sorts of his weapons, and to change the war according to the purpose aimed by the diverse persons. On them seen by

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<sup>338</sup> In war there is no law to specify me what attacks I must answer and what attacks I must not answer. I must fight on all ways in order to defend myself and to gain the victory.

him as idle and helpless in their thoughts, the devil wages war to them, strongly, since the beginning, and the devil rises against them hard and strong temptations, in order him to make them since the beginning to taste the sorts of his evilness ad to engulf them, since their first battle, in fear, and the path to seem them harsh and hard to cross and they to say: "If the beginning is like so hard and harsh, who will be able to face, until the end, the many wars placed along the way?". And by saying that, they will no longer be able to stand strong, or to advance. And they won't be even able to look at something else, because of being so much burdened by this care. And, gradually, the devil intensifies his war against them, in order they to run away from him.

Better said, God Himself is the One Who allows the devil to get stronger against them and God doesn't help them in anything. This is for they entered the fight for the Lord with doubt and with a cold heart. This is for it is said: "Cursed is everyone who does the things of the Lord with idleness and who impeded his hand from blood" (Jer. 48: 10)<sup>339</sup>. And again: "Close is the Lord to them who fear Him" (Ps. 84: 10)<sup>340</sup>. This is for the Lord commands us to meet the devil without fear or indifference, saying: "You start, therefore, to destroy him and start the war against him and clinch with him and fight manly. And start place you fear over all you enemies from under the sky, says the Lord" (Deut. 11; 25). This is because, is you do not die of a willing death with your body, you will die an unwilling death with your soul, because of you parting with God.

So, as far as you are able to, do not resist against willingly receiving the temporary sufferings for God, so that you to enter His glory. This is for, if you die bodily in the fight for it, the Lord Himself will crown you and He will bestow your honored bones with the honor of the martyrs. That's why, as I said before, the idle and the drowsy at the beginning of their asceticism, they who do not strive to surrender on themselves to the death, they will be in all the wars as weak and lacking their manhood. Better said, God Himself allows them to be persecuted and warred. This is because they haven't truly

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<sup>339</sup> Namely he fears to fight for the Lord to the blood, to the receiving of the death.

<sup>340</sup> In KJB we have: Ps. 85: 9: "Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land."; in ROB we have: Ps. 84: 10: "But His salvation is nigh to them who fear Him, in order the glory to dwell in our land." (E. l. t.'s n.)

searched for him, and because of attempting they to fulfill the thing of the Lord by spying on Him and by mocking of Him. That's why also the devil knew them in the beginning, and he tried their thoughts, as they were, if they were fearful and full of love for himself and for the care for their body. Because of that he persecutes them like a blizzard. This is for the devil doesn't see in them any power of the mind (intelligible, spiritual), which the devil usually sees it within the saints. This is for the power works together with the man and it helps the man and it shows the taking-of-care to the man, according to the man's decision according to God, and according to the man's heading towards that target wanted by God for the man. Because the devil won't be able to come closer to the man, or to bring temptations to the man, if the man doesn't get lazy, and if God doesn't allow it (or God doesn't forsake the man), or if God doesn't loose the man towards defiled thoughts, through the self-appreciation and pride, or through some thought of doubt, and by the division of the man's soul. These ones are asked for by the devil in order the devil to tempt them.

But the beginners and the simple and the inexperienced are not asked for, from God, by the devil, in the same manner that the devil asks for the saints and for them who are great (with their soul), in order the devil to tempt them. This is because the devil knows that God doesn't let (the man) to fall in his hands. This is for God knows that the man is unable to face the devil's temptations. God will let the people only if they have one of the reasons which I spoke about before. This is because then the power of the Providence of God will get far from them. This is one sort of the devils' wars.

## **Word LII**

### **About the second Sort of the Devil's Wars**

But on them whom the devil sees as full of manhood and strong and who reckon the death as nothing and who reach a great zeal and who surrender on themselves to all the trials and death and who despise the life within world and within body and all the trials, the devil doesn't meet them immediately and

he doesn't show on himself for a long time, but he limits on himself and he gives them room and he doesn't get in their way from their first start, neither he enters the war with them. This is because the devil knows that any beginning of the war is hot and he knows that the ascetic has much zeal and that they who are the most ascetic among ascetics cannot be easily defeated. That's why, the devil doesn't do that because of his cowardice, but because he fears the godlike power that envelops these ones and that scares him.

So, when the devil sees them being thus, he won't dare to touch them, until he sees them with their zeal strayed and dropping their weapons which they have prepared into their thoughts, by forsaking the godlike words and the memories which are together-working and upholding<sup>341</sup>. So, he takes heed at the time of their getting lazy. And when those ones turn back, for a little while, to their previous thoughts, the devils too start contriving craftsmanships in order to defeat them through the flattering of their thoughts springing out of them, and the devils dig up a perdition pit for their souls, by the scattering of their thoughts coming them out of their laziness, thoughts which make the indifference master within them, or in their mind and hearts.

And the devil doesn't do these until he is impeded to wage war to them, but not because he wants to spare them or because he is ashamed by them. Because the devil reckons them as nothing. But I reckon that that is for a certain power surrenders them who feel the warmth of their zeal for God and on them who get out like some little children and they reject the world without much hesitation, hoping in God and not knowing whom they must fight against. That's why God banishes away from the devil's awful cunningness, in order the devil not to get near to them. And the enemy is kept on the leash, when he sees the Guardian Who always guards on those. This is for, if those do not throw away from them the reasons for the help, which are the prayer for asks, the toils, and the humble cogitation, the Upholder and the Helper won't ever get far from them.

Look and write within your heart that the love for pleasure and the love for resting are causes of the forsaking. But him who strongly restrains on himself from those he won't ever be

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<sup>341</sup> The memories of death, or the commandments of God, and of the promise they made when entering the monastery etc.



forsaken by the help from God. And the enemy won't be allowed to attack him. And if the enemy is at times allowed to attack him for guidance, the holy power will come after the enemy and it will stop the enemy. And that one won't fear the temptations from the devils, for his thought gives him courage and that power make him despise the devil<sup>342</sup>. This is for this godlike power teaches the people, like somebody would teach a boy how to swim, by letting that boy alone for a little while, and when that boy starts drowning, he will raise that boy above. This is for the boy swims on the hands of his teacher. And when the boy starts weakening in his courage and sinking, he who bears the boy on his hand shouts out at him, encouraging him: "Do not fear, for I am carrying you". And like the mother who teaches her little child how to walk, she get a little far from her child and she calls him to come to her, and when the little child coming to her starts wobbling and falling, because of the weak and feet and limbs, the mother runs to her child and grabs her child, likewise the grace of God carries and teaches the people who surrender on themselves with cleanness and with simplicity on the hands of their Maker and who have rejected the world with the whole their heart and who walk on the tracks of God<sup>343</sup>.

And you, man, who walk on the tracks of God, you must remember for the whole time of your asceticism, always, about the beginning and about the first zeal of the beginning of this way, and about the hot thoughts which you came out of your house in the beginning and which you have took your place with in the front line. Test on yourself daily, in order the warmth of your soul not to become cold in wielding some of the weapons which you have been dressed up with, and in your zeal ignited within you in the beginning, namely at the beginning of your fight, lest you will lose some of the weapons which you have been dressed up with at the beginning of your battle. And you must always raise your voice inside the battle camp and you must encourage your sons from your right hand, namely your

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<sup>342</sup> The thought at God, the prayer addressed to God, they always meet the power of God. Where is the first one there is the last one too. The thought and the prayer do not refer to God from distance, but they enter the touch with the power of God and they are penetrated by that power.

<sup>343</sup> The grace let the people alone, for a little while, in order they to get strengthened, or the grace rather gives them the impression of letting them alone. Even from a certain distance, real, of apparent, God send them power and courage.

thoughts, and you must show to the others, namely to the enemy, that you are awake. And if you see, at the beginning, some fearsome attack from the enemy, you must not get weak. Maybe that it will be useful to you. This is for Him Who saves you as a gift, He won't allow anyone to come nigh to you, except for some oikonomia beneficial to you.

But you must not show idleness since the beginning, lest by that idleness from the beginning, by stepping forwards, you will fall and you won't be able to resist the troubles coming upon you: I mean the troubles because of hunger, because of helplessness, because of the fearsome hallucinations, or because of similar others. You must not leave the Leader of the battle, for He will help you against your enemy, lest your enemy will find you as he expected you to be. And you must ceaselessly call upon God and cry before Him and He will send you help. This is for once you have seen nigh to you Him Who saves you, you will no longer be defeated again by the enemy opposing you. These two sorts of fight have been shown until here.

### **Word LIII**

#### **About the Third Way of Enemy's Fighting against Them Who are Strong and Full of Manhood**

When, after all of these, the devil rises against somebody and the devil cannot defeat him in battle, better said the devil cannot defeat Him Who strengthen the man and Who helps the man and for Whom the man has been resisting the devil since the beginning and Whom the man takes power and patience from, so that the thick and material body defeats the incorporeal and cogitated with the mind one, so, when the enemy sees all the power received by man from God, and when the enemy sees the external senses defeated by the unseen things and by the sounds of the heard things, and the man's thought unweakened by flattering and delusions, the cunning one will want to search and find a craftsmanship which him to separate the man through, from the angel who helps the man. Better said, the cunning one wants to make bling the mind of

the helped man, so that him not longer to be helped. The enemy desire that within the man to be victorious the thought of the pride, so that the man staunchly believed that his victory comes from himself, and that he was the one gaining this richness to himself, and by his own power he has guarded on himself against the killed enemy. And sometimes he reckons that he has defeated the enemy haphazardly, and on some other times because of the enemy's helplessness (not to mention other ways and thoughts of the blasphemy, which his would will fall because of, into fear, even only by mentioning those). On some other occasions, the enemy present his delusions as unveilings from God, by showing to the man many things in his dreams. And when the man is awake, the enemy takes the image of an angel of light and he will do everything to persuade the man, gradually, to accept him and to surrender on himself in the devil's hands. And if the sapient man keeps his thoughts, better said the man keeps the remembrance of Him Who helps the man and if the man focuses his heart's eyes on the sky, in order him not to take heed at them who whisper these within him, the enemy will attempt to plot against the man in other ways.

#### **Word LIV**

#### **About the Fourth Way Which the Enemy Opposes through War**

Given the kinship that our nature has with this fourth sort of war which left to the enemy in order to cause the perdition of the man through, which this sort of plot is? This is that of attacking the man through his natural needs. This is for, often, the mind of him who lives in asceticism is made blind by seeing and by the closeness of the thing submitted to the senses, and his mind is easily defeated in battle when reaching nigh to the material things, but much more than that when the material things are in front of his eyes. This is because the awful devil uses this craftsmanship with knowledge and with skillfulness; with the skillfulness the devil gained by battling so many strong and powerful warriors, who have been falling into these ones. And the devil does that in a deceiving manner. Even

if the devil cannot make the people to work through deeds, due to their steadfastness of their quietude and due to their restraining from the cohabitation with the occasions and with the causes (of their sins), the devil still fights to make their mind to cause to itself diverse hallucinations, by tickling them, by stirring up movements within them, in order they to sink in indecent thoughts and they to agree those thoughts and they to be guilty of those thoughts, so that their Helper to get far from them.

This is because the devil knows that the victory of the man and the man's defeat and the man's treasure and the man's upholding and all the things of him who lives in asceticism, they have their ground in the man's thought and they are committed through a small agreement, only in order the thought to be moved away from its place and in order the thought to descend from that height down to earth and the thought to show, through decision, in an instance of agreement, its consent. It happened thus to many among saints through the hallucinations of the women's beauty. And even on several occasions, to them who came to a mile or two nigh to the world, or even at a day's walk distance, the cunning one plotted and brought to the saints the women as such. And to them who live far from the world, because the enemies cannot catch them in such a snare, the enemies show them the beauty of the women in hallucinations, sometimes in the adornment of the vestments, and on some other times in debauched views by showing them indecently the image of the naked woman. Through these things and through similar things, the devil defeated some of them with the deed itself, while others were mocked through hallucinations, because the frivolity of their thoughts. And thus, they reached at the bottom of their despair, and their souls deviated towards the world and they fell from the heavenly hope.

But other, by being stronger than those, and by being illuminated by the grace, they defeated the devil and his hallucinations and they trampled over all the body's pleasures and they have been found proven into the love for God. And for many times, the devil sowed them the hallucination of the gold and of some expensive things, and of some gold treasures. And sometimes the devil showed those as such, intending that, through such diverse hallucinations, to impede, maybe, on

some of them, and to make them stumble through some of their snares and traps.

But, Lord, Lord, do not lead us in such temptations, You Who knows our helplessness, out of which only the strong and experienced ones can get out, by defeating such a hallucination.

And through all these trials the tempter devil is allowed to wage war to the saints, in order their love for God to be tested in such trials, namely if they prove to love God and if they persevere in loving God and of the truly love God, by restraining on themselves from such things, by getting far from such things, and by depriving on themselves of such things. And even if they come closer to such things, they force on themselves to despise them and to disregard those things for their love for God. These ones won't be flattered by devils, they won't be defeated by devils. They are tried not only in order they to be known as proven to God, but they to be known as such by the devil himself. This is because the devil desires much to tempt and to test, if he could, on all of them, and him to ask them from God to test them, as the devil asked for the righteous Job. And when the devil receives a small permission from God, the devil comes closer tempting strongly, but according to eth measure of the tempted. This is because the lawless devil doesn't attack as he wishes<sup>344</sup>. And through this are proven the true and steadfast ones into the love for God, for they despise all of these and they reckon all of these as nothing in their eyes, in comparison to their love for God. But by getting themselves humble, and they by always giving glory to Him Who helps them in all things and Who is the Cuse of their victory, and by surrendering on themselves into His hands in time of fight, they say to Him: "You, Lord, are strong, and Yours is the fight. Fight

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<sup>344</sup> Namely, the trials brought by the devil upon somebody won't exceed that somebody's power to endure them. This is because, if the temptations exceeded this power, the man would have no guilt if he didn't endure and overcame those. So, they who fall, they cannot excuse on themselves that the trials of the temptations exceeded their power of enduring. Of course, the things are getting more complicated, given that the man doesn't overcome the temptations with his own power, but also with the power from God. But the power given by God to man it is given to the man so that not to make the man's maximum effort unnecessary, and neither requires an impossible effort to the man. Exception from these are the wonders done in some cases by some people. But maybe on those cases as well, the above-nature power given to some people, it is according to their above-nature faith. By and large, thought, the border between the nature's order and that order from above-nature it is difficult to establish, and it is very mobile. Withing the believers the above-nature powers, by penetrating the nature, those powers will elevate the nature's powers themselves on diverse levels.

and be victorious in it, Lord, for us!”. Then these ones are probed as the gold in the oven.

But they who are not strong into truth, by being tested through such temptations, they will be known as such and they will fall from God as some garbage, because of giving room within themselves to their enemy, and they will be found guilty because of the frivolity of their cogitation, or because of their pride. This is because they haven't been found worthy of receiving within them that power had by the saints as working within them. This is for this power that works together with us it cannot be defeated. This is for our Lord is Almighty and Stronger than everyone and He is always victorious within the mortal body when He descends to help us in the war. The defeated ones are those who willingly empty on themselves of His through their ingratitude. They haven't been found worthy of that power that uphold the victor, and they feel on themselves empty even of the usual and own power which they had during the heavy wars.

But how do they feel on themselves emptied? By the fact that they see their falling as sweet and pleasant and it is unpleasant to them to endure the burden of the war waged them by their enemy, a war which they once were victorious in, with zeal, by the impulse of the nature felt by them, at that time, as hot and nimble. And now they are not finding those within their soul anymore.

And they who are in their beginnings as idle and drowsy and who do not fear only these battles all the similar battles, but they are even disturbed and they fear even the rustling of the leaves in the tree, and who are defeated even by the small need of the hunger and by the small weakness, by rejecting (the promise they made) and by turning back.

And they who are true and experienced, they do not satiate on themselves even with greenery and vegetables, and don't even accept to taste roots of dry vegetables, because the established time of eating. And they even sleep on the floor, despite they have their body and their eyes weakened by the great exhaustion of their body. And when the moment of their exit from their body draws near, they won't allow to themselves to be defeated and to fall off their strengthened will. This is for they desire and they want to force on themselves for their love for God and they chose better to toil for virtue than to have the temporary life and all the resting within it. And when

the temptations come to them, they will rather rejoice and they will become through those temptations even more consummate. And neither have they been hesitating into the tiring toils they have been enduring for their love for Christ, but until they end their life, they are ready to receive manly the troubled and they do not run away from troubles, for through troubled they become consummate. And may the glory forever and ever to belong to our God! Amen.

## **Word LV**

### **About Passions**

How sweet are the occasions of the passions! Somebody can cut off his passions and he can appease on himself, by keeping on himself far from them, and by getting glad for the passions' ceasing; but he cannot forsake the causes of his passions. That's why we are tempted even unwillingly. And we get sad because of our passions, but we still want to have the occasions of our passions. We do not love our sins, but we welcome with pleasure the causes bringing the sins within us. That's why the last ones become the causes for the first ones. He who loves the occasions of the passions he will unwillingly obey the passions and he will become slave to the passions. he who hates his sins he will stop committing them, and he who confesses his sins he will achieve the forgiveness of his sins. But it is impossible to somebody to leave the habit of his sins before gaining enmity towards his habituation to sins, in addition to the confession of his mistakes. The first one is cause for true humbleness; the second one is followed by shame and by the pricking of the heart.

If we do not hate the reproachable things, we won't be able to feel the stench of their work, neither will us be able to feel the rottenness they are spreading around, as long as we carry them within our souls. Until you will cast out of yourself what is inappropriate, you won't know what shame you are intertwined with, and you won't blush because of it. When you see your burden mirrored by others, you will find out the shame sitting on it. Part yourself with the evil things of the world and

you will know the world's bad smell. This is because, if you do not part with the world, you won't know the world, but you rather will be engulfed in its stench as in a good fragrance and you will reckon the nakedness of your shame as a curtain of glory<sup>345</sup>.

Blessed is him who has got far from the world and from the world's darkness and who doesn't take heed except at himself. This is for he who lives amid the vain things he won't be able to serve the power of the understanding, neither of the discernment<sup>346</sup>. This is because how would he be able to discern what it is due, while having a discernment power that is disturbed? Blessed is him who has left the dizziness of his drunkenness and who has seen through others how insatiable his drunkenness is. This is for then he will know his shame. As long as somebody carries within himself the dizziness of the drunkenness of his sins, all the things he commits seem decent to him<sup>347</sup>. This is for, when the nature goes out of its order, it will be equally drunk: either with wine, or with lusts<sup>348</sup>. This is because both of these sorts of drunkenness get the nature out of what is due and both of them move within the body - which they are carried by - the same fever. The sorts of the passions are diverse; but the cause of dizziness is one; but the causes are different and not the same and they differ according to the way which they are received in.

Any delectation is followed by a trouble; and any trouble experienced for God it will be followed by a delectation. If all the realities from this world are submitted to corruption, the corruption is produced through the opposite realities, either here or in the future age, either at the time of the exit. This happens especially to the pleasure provided by debauchery, or to the unpleasant suffering opposed to this pleasure, a suffering that

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<sup>345</sup> You cannot feel your own bad smell. As long as you are united with the stinking world, you won't feel the world's bad smell. Only if you are clean, you will be able to feel the smell of the unclean ones.

<sup>346</sup> The sense of the discernment is blunt in the stained one, in him who is deprived of cleanness. The cleanness and the sensitiveness are tied together.

<sup>347</sup> As there is a drunkenness with God, one that doesn't see the world or it sees the world's ugliness, there is also a drunkenness with the world that doesn't see the world in its ugliness and that doesn't see the holiness of God.

<sup>348</sup> The drunkenness with lusts is a disorder of our nature and it is a becoming ugly of the true nature of the reality.



is caused by the striving towards getting sanctified<sup>349</sup>. And this is appointed by God that, either on the way itself, or at the end of their way, they to taste the punishment, in order this one to pass, for His rich mercy, either to reward or to a receiving of the rest of what was down-paid. This is for God gives the possibility of achieving the good until the last moment. But God impedes the evil by submitting him who is worthy of punishment, to the torments, as it was written. "He who is rebuked here for his shame he eats out of his Gehenna".

Guard yourself against that freedom that leads you to the evil slavery<sup>350</sup>. Guard yourself against that comforting that brings the war. Guard yourself against that knowledge that leads you to encounters with the temptations and, especially, against that desire from before the consummate repentance<sup>351</sup>. This is because, if all of us are sinners and nobody is above temptations, then not virtue will be superior to repentance. This is for one will never be able to consummate the work of the repentance<sup>352</sup>. That's why, the repentance is due always to them who want to be saved, either sinners or righteous. And there is no border to consummation, because even the consummation of the consummate it is non-consummate. That's why the repentance is not given a limit either by times, nor by deeds, before death<sup>353</sup>. Remember that each pleasure is followed by disgust, and then by bitterness.

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<sup>349</sup> "In the future age there is no corruption. This is for in the state of resurrection, he says, neither will they marry nor will be they married, but they will be like the angels of God in heavens" (cf. Mt. 22: 30). He is calling here as corruption, maybe, the changing of the state that is received by everybody either in this life, or at the time of their exit, either in the future age. They who have been cohabiting with the pleasure for debauchery they will receive the changing from pleasure to punishment. And they who have been cohabiting with the unpleasant suffering caused by their striving for sanctification and contrary to the ugly pleasure, they will receive the change from trouble to resting.

<sup>350</sup> That freedom that you say about it that you manifest it by committing sins, it will make you slave to the sin.

<sup>351</sup> Guard yourself against the desire for the consummate resting, before the consummate repentance. And the repentance doesn't ever come to an end before our death.

<sup>352</sup> Any virtue can reach an even higher stage, though it is submitted to repentance because of the non-complete stage which it has reached at. In this sense, no degree of virtue is superior to repentance, namely no degree of virtue gets the man out from under his duty for repentance.

<sup>353</sup> Only when we reached our consummation, we would get rid of our duty for repentance. But as the consummation has no limit in this life, the repentance has not limit as well.

Guard yourself against that joy that is not accompanied by a cause of the change<sup>354</sup>. This is for, everything that has hidden in itself an *oikonomia* from above, it cannot reach and it cannot know the border, and this is the cause of its change<sup>355</sup>. Fear him who you see that he doesn't change on himself<sup>356</sup>. This is because he walks, he says, besides the way<sup>357</sup>. He who knows that he wisely stirs his ship through the world, he has mixed the change within all his things. And the exterior realities of the world are like a shadow to him<sup>358</sup>.

To the resting of the limbs, it follows an exit and a disturbance of the thoughts; and to an over-measure work it follows the idleness; and to the idleness it follows the exit<sup>359</sup>. But each going out differs from another. This is because to the first going out, namely to that going out due to the resting, it will follow the war of the fornication; and the second going out, namely that out of idleness, it will be followed by the leaving from the place of appeasement and by the moving from place to place. And that work that perseveres, painfully, within the borders of the measure it won't search for honor. Its diminution will increase the pleasure, while the lack of measure will increase the going out. Endure, brother, the insanity of your nature that is victorious within you, for it prepares you to reach that wisdom that has the beginning of the eternal crown<sup>360</sup>. Do not get scared by the disturbance of that body you have out of Adam, that is prepared to reach that delectation that cannot be

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<sup>354</sup> A joy that hasn't within itself the discontent with the reached stage and that hasn't in itself the urge for ascending above the reached stage – namely by a change, it is a joy of the pride and it is a reconciliation with the limitation.

<sup>355</sup> We cannot reach the border of the consummation during this life. And this is the cause of a ceaseless striving for elevating on ourselves on a higher level, to constantly change on ourselves.

<sup>356</sup> These ones are callous either in evil or in pride.

<sup>357</sup> Outside the way leading to God, namely outside the way by and large, they remaining locked up in this world.

<sup>358</sup> He who walks the way towards God, he will reckon this world as a shadow.

<sup>359</sup> This getting out of the thoughts it is their exit from under our control, it is their departure towards other things which are damaging to us, and towards the deeds related to such thoughts.

<sup>360</sup> When you are tempted, do not despair, but endure the temptation. This is for enduring the trouble coming upon you by temptation it means the beginning of your crowning. But he who chooses to him such a life without pleasures, and who aims to the future happiness, he seems to be insane. But through that he reaches the wisdom that is itself the beginning of the crowning with the eternal happiness.

understood with the bodily thing in this life<sup>361</sup>. When it is present the heavenly image that is the Emperor of the peace, do not be disturbed by the changing opposite to the disturbance of the nature. This is for the unpleasant suffering is temporary within him who received it with pleasure<sup>362</sup>. This is because the pleasures are like the dogs which usually stay around the slaughterhouses and which will run away if they hear a word, but if they are encouraged, they will rush upon like those very big lions. Despise your lust while it still is small, in order you not to remember the strength of its heat. This is for the mastery upon the small things it will banish the danger away. This is because of being impossible you to master over the big things if you cannot defeat the unimportant things.

Remember the future life, brother, for it is not like this one that crawls and moves through juices; remember that life that is crushed death; remember that life that isn't the heat of the mating, that causes the childish nature tiredness through the tickling of the pleasure. Endure the tiredness of the battle, which you have placed in, in order you to be tested, in order you to take crown from God and you to be resting on yourself after passing away from this world. Remember that resting that has no end and remember the life submitted to attacks, remember the consummate stage, remember the steadfast state, and remember that slavery that forces one towards loving God, a slavery that sets its mastery over the nature<sup>363</sup>. May us be found worthy of this too, by the grace of Christ Who it is due the glory together with the without-beginning Father and with the All-Holy Ghost, now and always and forever! Amen.

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<sup>361</sup> Adam's body will reach a state superior to that know by us now. But the body is disturbed at the beginning of a harsh road which the body is guided on. But this body's disturbance must not scare a monk.

<sup>362</sup> The whole this paragraph and the previous paragraph encourage him who is tempted, namely him who has to endure the change from the state of peace to that of the temptations and of the trials. When a trouble (a big suffering, or an unpleasant suffering) comes upon you, you must think that if you receive that trouble with pleasure, and with patience, it will be only a temporary trouble.

<sup>363</sup> It is a slavery of the love, which the man still doesn't feel himself in like a slave, for the love is in the same time everything that is most conform to the man's free will. It is a slavery only in the senses that he who has been sweetened by it, he will no longer be able to get out of it, and he doesn't even want to. It sets its mastery upon nature, but in the same time it elevates the nature. It sets its mastery upon freedom, but in the same time the freedom feels at large.

**Word LVI****God Allowed towards Our Benefit that Our Soul to Receive the Passions. And about the Works of the Ascesis**

Sliding into some fall of the sin it is a sign of the nature's weakness. And God allowed the soul to receive passions towards the soul's benefit. This is for God hasn't thought to place the soul above passion before the second birth<sup>364</sup>. And receiving passion it is beneficial for the pricking of the conscience. But remaining within passions it is an indecent and shameless thing.

There are three ways which a soul can come closer to God on: either through the warmth of the faith, or by fear, or by being rebuked by God. Nobody can come close to God's love except on these three ways.

As the belly's covetousness gives birth to the disturbance of the thoughts, likewise out of much-speaking and out of the disorder of the meetings will be born the nescience and the getting out (the scattering) of the mind. The worry for the life's things it will disturb the soul and getting entangled with them it will confuse the mind and it will take the mind out of quietude.

That monk who has surrendered on himself to the heavenly ploughing, he owes to always be outside any worry of the life, in order him not to find within himself anything belonging to this time when he comes into himself. This is for, by stopping on himself from these ones, he will be able to cogitate in an unscattered manner, at the law of God, day and night. The bodily toils without the cleanness of the mind are like a barren womb and like some dry tits. This is because they cannot come closer to the knowledge of God<sup>365</sup>. Such toil tire off the body but they won't take care of uprooting the passions from within mind. That's why they reap nothing. Like him who sows among thorns he won't be able to reap anything, likewise him who sinks on himself into the keeping the evil in mind and in the love for earning, he won't be able to achieve anything, but

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<sup>364</sup> Before the general resurrection.

<sup>365</sup> Only a mind that is clean of other thoughts can continuously think at God and it can know God in the endlessness of His power and love.

he will only moan on his bed, because for not being able to sleep and because of the gathering of good. This is for the Scripture confesses saying: "As a people who worked the righteousness and who didn't disregard any of Lord's commands, they ask Me for the righteousness and for the truth, and they want to come close to Me, to God, saying: why we have we been fasting and You haven't seen that, and we have humbled on ourselves and You didn't know that? Because on the days of your fasting you do your wills, namely you fulfill your cunning thoughts" (Isa. 58: 2-3). And you bring those together with your cogitations, as complete fruits to the idols, which you reckon among yourselves as gods, by sacrificing to them your body that is more precious than any incense that you must consecrate to Me through your good deeds and through your clean conscience<sup>366</sup>.

A good land is that that gladdens its worker by bringing forth a hundredfold harvest. Over the strength of that soul that sparks through the remembrance of God, and through the non-sleeping taking of vigil day and night, the Lord builds up to Himself a cloud that covers Him during day and it lightens Him up with fire during night<sup>367</sup>. This is for within darkness there will shine the light.

Like the cloud covers the light of the moon, likewise the steams of the stomach banish away from within soul the wisdom of God. And like the flame of the fire is at large in dry woods, likewise the body is at large when the belly is full. And like the matter added to matter increases the fire's flame, likewise the diversity of the foods increases the body's movement. Within the body that loves the pleasure it doesn't dwell the knowledge of God. And he who loves his body he won't achieve the grace from God. Like out of the birth labors, it is born the fetus that gladdens her who has given him birth, likewise out of the ascetic toil of the hunger it will be born within soul, as fruit, the knowledge of God's mysteries. And to them who are lazy and who love the pleasure it will be born the fruit of the shame. Like the father takes care of his children, likewise Christ takes care of that body that suffers heavily for

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<sup>366</sup> An affirmation of the value of the body, that is more precious than any incense, when the body is brought to God as a tool for good deeds which the body is sanctified by.

<sup>367</sup> One must remark the beauty of this image. The remembrances of God are like some sparks of the soul. The light from within mind is met by God's cloud of light.

Him and He is always close to his mouth. And the fruit of the wise work is priceless.

Stranger is him who has gone with his mind out of all the things of the life. Mourner is him who spends all the days of his life in hunger and in thirst, while hoping for the future goods. Monk is him who lives outside the world and who always asks God for achieving the future goods. The monks' richness is the comforting coming to him out of crying and that joy that comes out of his faith shining within the chambers of his mind. Merciful is him who doesn't discern with his cogitation one from another, but he has mercy on all of them.

Virginal is not him who has guarded his body undefiled by mating, but him who is ashamed of himself when alone. If you love the righteousness, you will banish away the defiled thoughts occurring into your cogitation during reading and in the ask prayer, and then you will be armed against the causes of the nature (which urge you to sin). This is because without this one you won't be able to see the righteousness into your soul. If you want to gain the mercifulness, you must firstly accustom on yourself to despise everything, in order your mind not to be attracted downwards and so your mind to get out of its borders<sup>368</sup>. The light of the mercy is shown him who accepts to be done injustice to him<sup>369</sup>. The consummation of the humbleness consists of joyfully accepting the liar blames. If you really are merciful, you won't be disturbed within you when your things are unjustly robbed from you, neither you will say about your loss to people from outside. You will rather do such that the loss will be swallowed by your mercy as the sourness of the sine is diluted by the multitude of the water. And you must show the abundance of your mercy in the goods which you reward with on those who did injustice to you. So did the blessed Elijah to his enemies who wanted to enslave him. This was for, when the prayer and he blinded them up with mist, he

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<sup>368</sup> An unmerciful mind is no longer within its borders; such a mind has got strayed from its nature. In the nature of the mind there is the compassion for others; the mind is connected through invisible wires to others. The sinking of the man within himself doesn't mean getting indifferent to others, but it means finding the sensitiveness for other in the won deep. In itself the mind finds the clean connections with others. Only the superficiality is egotistic and indifferent towards others. Only the non-knowing of the self means also non-knowing the others and being insensitive towards them.

<sup>369</sup> You must have mercy on him who does injustice to you, because he is the one losing by that, as one who has forgotten about himself and he cuts off his connections with others, connections which life was coming to himself before.

showed the power dwelling within him, and when they gave them food and drink and he let them go, he showed his mercifulness (4<sup>370</sup> Kings 6: 18, 23).

He who truly is humble in his thought, when injustice is done to him, he won't get upset, neither he will defend on himself against the deed which he was accused of. And he will receive the defamations as true and he won't take care of convincing the people that he has been unjustly defamed, but he asks for forgiveness. Some people willingly impropriated to themselves the name as fornicators, while not being so; others endured the name as fornicators while being far from such a thing, and they accepted with tears to be burdened with the consequences of a sin which they didn't do, and they cryingly asked for forgiveness for the lawlessness they committed to them who unjustly accused them of something they didn't do, and thus they were crowned with the whole cleanness and righteousness<sup>371</sup>. Others, in order they not to be glorified for their virtuous state hidden within them, they showed on themselves in the countenance of the wounded (by sins) ones, despite they had the godlike state and they were steadfast in their quietude, so that they had the holy angels as heralds of their valiant deeds, for their fullest consummation.

You reckon on yourself as having a humble cogitation, but others were blaming on themselves, while you do not accept being blamed even by others, and you reckon on yourself as humble in thought. If you are humble in thought, you will prove on yourself through those, in order you to see if you get troubled when injustice is done to you.

Our Savior calls "many dwelling places of the Fathers" (Jn. 14: 2) the measures of the cogitations of those who dwell in that country, namely the different powers of discerning the diversity of the spiritual gifts (charismas), which the mind rejoiced of. He didn't mean by many dwelling places spatial differences, but levels of the gifts. This is for, as each one enjoys the seen sun according to the cleanness of his seeing and receiving power, and like a candlestick lighting up a house it spreads out diverse rays, without its light being shared among

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<sup>370</sup> In KJB we usually have this book called as 2 Kings.

<sup>371</sup> They imitated Christ Who took our sins upon Himself and Who accepted to be crucified for our sins, by suffering, in a real manner, for our sins. Actually, Christ and those who imitated Him, they realized the deep communion existing between them and the others. And they suffered for others' sins as for their own, for they suffered for those people themselves.

many candlesticks, likewise in the future age and the righteous will dwell into a sole fatherland without being divided, but each of them will be illuminated by the unique understand Sun and understood by each one according to their measure, as a sole sky and place and chair and sight and image. And no one will see the measures of his companion, either that one will be superior or inferior to him, lets by seeing the richer gift of his companion and the smaller gift he has that to become him a cause for sadness and unhappiness. That cannot be there where it is no sadness, neither sigh, but each one is glad within himself according to the gift given to him, according to his measure, but one is what everybody will see within themselves and one will be their joy<sup>372</sup>. And except these two groups, there is no other in the middle. I mean there is a group at height and there is a group lower; an in their middle there is the multitude of the rewards<sup>373</sup>.

And if this is the truth, as it actually is, what could be more insane and more stupid that saying as some people say: "it suffices to me to escape the Gehenna; I won't be worries of not entering the Kingdom. This is for escaping the Gehenna is the same with entering the Kingdom. As falling off the Kingdom means entering the Gehenna". Doubtlessly, the Scripture didn't tell us about three places. But what? "When the Son of Man will come into His glory, He will place the sheep on His right hand and the goat on His left hand" (Mt. 25: 31). The Scripture doesn't tell three groups, but two: one on the right hand and one on the left hand. And it separated the border of their dwelling places by saying that some of them, namely the

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<sup>372</sup> There won't be envy either contempt, but only humbleness. He who sees more he won't reckon that another sees less. And he who sees less, he won't be told by another that that one sees more. Neither him who sees Christ less, nor him who receives deeper communications of Christ's love will realize that, for each of them will have in front of him the same face of Christ. As one can see even clearer in the followings, Saint Isaac rejected the idea of a middle state between "Kingdom" and "hell", but he admitted though a variety of levels in the "kingdom". Saint Isaac didn't agree them who told: "It suffices to me not to end into Gehenna, for by that I will enter the Kingdom". Saint Isaac wanted the man aspiring to enter a higher as possible a dwelling place into the Kingdom. But between the highest place and the lowest place there are a multitude of rewards. But, in the lowest place, in hell, there won't be any rewards.

<sup>373</sup> In the last two sentences, Saint Isaac crossed to another idea, one related to the first idea. If all of them from the heavenly dwelling places has a sole view, one can no longer reckon that except the heavens and the hell, or beside seeing of unseeing on Christ, there would be a middle state (neither seeing nor unseeing).



sinners, they will go to eternal damnation, while the righteous will shine as the sun in the eternal life (Mt. 25: 46). And again: "There will come from east and from west and they will rest into the Abraham's bosoms, into the Kingdom of Heavens. And the suns of the Kingdom will be cast in the outer darkness where there will be the crying and the gnashing of teeth" (Mt. 8: 11), and that is more fearsome than any fire.

So, have you understood out of these that the state opposed to the state from above is right the tormenting Gehenna? So, it is good to teach the people to receive the kindness from God and to urge the people to remain under God's taking-of-care and to remove the people from straying to the knowledge of the truth. This is the king of working of Christ and of the apostles; and it is a very high one.

And when the man feels that he has existed this leaving and the ceaseless partaking with God and that his conscience is getting weakened in seeing (in contemplation) and his quietude is getting disturbed and darkened, because his cogitation need guarding and it need the control of the senses, and when he feels that while wanting to heal others he is going to lose his own health and he gets out of his will's freedom, and he passes to the disturbance of his mind, he must remember the apostolic word that says that the hard food is appropriate to the more consummate ones (Hebr. 5: 14), and he must turn back to his previous things, so that not to hear being told to him: "Doctor, heal on yourself" (Lk. 4: 23).

Let him judge on himself, therefore, and let him guard his good habit, and instead of helping others by uttering words, let him serve through his good living; and instead of teaching by the sound of his mouth, let him teach by his deeds. And only when he sees his soul healthy, let him try to help and to be useful to others through his health. This is for, when he is far from people, he will better be able to help them through his good work, in order they to progress in the zeal of the good deeds., more than he could help them by words, as long as himself is ill and he need the medicine more than they do. "Because if blind guides blind, both of them will fall into pit" (Mt. 15: 14). The hard food belongs to the healthy ones, who have they senses accustomed to it so that they can receive any food, namely the temptations of all their senses, without

hurting their heart through meetings, due to their accustoming into consummation<sup>374</sup>.

When the devil wants to defile the mind of ones like these ones by fornication thought, the devil first tests their patience with thoughts of vain-glory. This is because the attack of this thought doesn't seem to them as being a passion. The enemy uses to do so to them who guard their mind and who he cannot quickly sow shameless thoughts. And after the enemy gets him out of his fortification and that one starts talking to the first thought, ad to get far from his fortification, the enemy bring in his way the matter of the fornication and the enemy directs his mind towards the deeds of the debauchery. And the enemy first disturbs his mind with the sudden bait of such a thing, due to the righteousness from before in the thoughts, which the enemy makes it encounter such things, which sight the guiding mind was previously detached from. By that, even if the enemy doesn't totally defile the mind, he still gets the mind out of the previous worthiness. And if the mind turns back to the previous thoughts and it rejects the first bait of the thoughts, which is the cause of the bringing of the second thoughts, the passion could be easily stopped by the help from God.

But it is better one to get rid of passions by remembering the virtues, than to resist the baits. This is because of the passions when they get out of their den and they move towards waging war, they imprint within mind images and hallucinations. This is because this war gains much power upon the mind, by stirring up and by disturbing the thoughts. And according to the tule we mentioned before, after these ones have been banished away, there won't show up within mind no traces of passions.

The bodily toil and the cogitation at the things written in the Holy Scriptures they guard the cleanness. And the toil strengthened the hope and the fear. But the hope and the fear are planted into the cogitation by the getting far from people and by the ceaseless prayer. On the other hand, until the man doesn't receive the Comforter, the man still needs to follow the Holy Scriptures in order to be imprinted in his cogitation the

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<sup>374</sup> Saint Isaac the Syrian admitted to the monks a work of teaching the others, but after they have strengthened on themselves into a good and steadfast living. Only then they can receive the hard food of the meetings with others, or the temptations through senses, without endangering on themselves, for they have strengthened on themselves in souly health, or they have reached to be consummate.

memory of the goods, and through the ceaseless reading to be renewed within him the movement towards good and his soul to be guarded against the subtlety of the sin. Because of not achieving yet the power of the Ghost which gets him far from the deceit that steals his useful memories and it bring him closer, by scattering, to the indifference of his mind. But when the power of the Ghost dwells within the power of the soul that works within mind, then, instead of the Scriptures' law will start rooting within his heart the commandments of the Ghost. And then the heart learns hiddenly from the Ghost and it doesn't need the help from the things submitted to the senses. This is for, as long as the heart learns from the things submitted to the senses, the teaching will be followed by deceit and forgetfulness. But when the teaching comes from the Ghost its memory will remain unharmed<sup>375</sup>.

There are good thoughts and good wills; and there are evil thoughts and a cunning heart. The thoughts are a movement crossing through the mind, as a wind starting on the sea and rising the waves. The heart and the mind are the basis and the foundation. And the reward for the good and for the evil it will be done according to the foundation and not according to the movement of the thoughts<sup>376</sup>. The soul won't get appeased from the movement of the changing thoughts. But if you reward each one of theses that has not its foundation low, within heart, you will be ready to change, for tens of thousands of times a day, the good ones and the opposite ones.

He who has come out recently, through repentance, from the mixing with the passions, and who strives during the

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<sup>375</sup> Saint Isaac sees three levels in the ascension of the soul towards God. The bodily toil, which strengthens the hope and the fear; the reading of the Godlike Scriptures with the deepening of their meanings, in order the man to know his subtle movements urging him to sin; and the work of the Holy Ghost within the mind, a work that roots there the impulses towards good. When reached here, the man no longer looks at the exterior realities in order him to learn from them and through them. On the second level, the temptations still rob from within the soul the useful memories, as for instance the thought of death, the thought of God's judgment, and the thought of the future life. Saint Isaac discerns between the teaching received from outside, even that form the words of the Scripture, and the teaching received from the Ghost directly within the heart. This last case takes place when the heart has become totally soft and sensitive to the work of the Ghost. But one must firstly cross through the knowledge from the Scripture.

<sup>376</sup> Maybe the meaning is this: vainly will have someone good thoughts and movements within his soul if his foundation state is evil. The reward will be according to the steadfast foundation and not according to the passing movements.

prayer to elevate on himself over the earthly things, he is like a wingless bird that still crawls on the ground because of not being able to fly. So, he owed to gather his thoughts by reading, by working and with fear and by taking care of all the diversity of the virtues. This is because without these ones he won't be able to know anything. But these too, they will keep the mind undefiled only for a short while. Later on, there will come the memories disturbing and defiling the heart. This is for he hasn't felt yet the freedom of the quietude which somebody gathers his mind in, after a short while, by forgetting the things. He hasn't felt that yet because of still having him the wings of his body, namely the virtues, which are committed in a seen manner. But he hasn't seen yet the wings of the sight (contemplation), neither has him be found worthy of feeling those<sup>377</sup>. And these are the mind's wings which one gets closer to the heavenly realities with, and he detached on himself from the earthly realities<sup>378</sup>.

As long as somebody serves the Lord through the things submitted to the senses, the images of these things imprint his thoughts and he cogitates at the godlike realities with the images of the bodily realities. But when he receives the feeling of the things from within, then, on the measure of his feeling,

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<sup>377</sup> It is to be remarked the connection between these two feelings: that of the quietude and that of the freedom. Only the quietude which somebody has reached at, it shows that he reached to see that he has gained the freedom of his cogitation from things. Saint Isaac is repeating here, in another form, the idea of the three steps of the ascension in the climbing of him who has liberated on himself of scattering. On the first level the man is like a bird that haven't yet wings; then he gains his wings. This is the first step, when the man recently exited his sins and he still hasn't except the repentance. On the second level he accustoms on himself to virtues and now he has bodily wings, for his body no longer crawls into sins. Finally, he has achieved the wings of his mind, or of the contemplation, for his mind too has been liberated from the earthly thoughts, by flying up towards God. On this level the man has gained the freedom of the quietude. This is the third step. This presentation of the climbing corresponds to the previous presentation. The third step from here corresponds to the mind which the Holy Ghost dwell sin, as shown in the previous description.

<sup>378</sup> While one still takes care of the virtues with the body, he won't have the freedom of the complete quietude which helps one to fly upwards from the earthly realities. That one still preoccupies on himself with committing some deeds, namely he still looks at some duties towards persons and things. These too are values for he who preoccupies on himself with them he has exited the prison of his egotism. But only the virtues of the contemplation are the wings helping somebody to totally fly upwards from the earthly realities towards the heavenly realities.

mind will be elevated above the images of the things, from time to time<sup>379</sup>.

When your soul gets closer to exiting the darkness, you will have this sign: your heart burns and it is hot like the fire, day and night. Then you will reckon the world as garbage and ashes and you will no longer desire either food, because of the sweetness of the new and fiery thoughts always moving within your heart. And you will be suddenly given a spring of tears that flows as a creek, effortlessly, and mixed with your deeds, namely into your reading and prayer, into your cogitation and eating and drinking; and within all your things there are mixed your tears. And when you see these within your soul, make on yourself full of daring, for you have crossed the sea<sup>380</sup>. But you must even after that add and keep strong yours guarding to your things, in order the grace to get multiplied within you day by day<sup>381</sup>.

But until you haven't encountered this, you still haven't walked your way, in order you to reach the mountain of God<sup>382</sup>. And if, after you have found and you have received the world of the tears, they stop and your warmth has become cold, without any change in other regards, namely without the bodily weakening, woe to you for what you have lost! This is because you have reached to the self-appreciation, or to carelessness, or to drowsiness. And what follows to the tears after you have received them and what will meet you after the tears, we are going to write in another place, in the heads about Providence,

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<sup>379</sup> Thinking at God by using images is inferior to the unmediated feeling of God above these images. This is no longer a theoretical thinking, but it is emotional feeling of touching of God. Thinking at God by using images is characteristic to the second level, namely to the level of the virtues, of the reading of the Scriptures, and of the contemplation of the godlike rationalities through things.

<sup>380</sup> Here are being given some descriptions of the third level. One of its characteristics are the tears. He who has reached here he has crossed the sea of the temptations, of the troubles, of the efforts for virtues, but he still hasn't exited the darkness.

<sup>381</sup> So, you must not stop on yourself either in this resting, but you must keep deepening on yourself evermore in it, or in the living of the effluvia of the grace, or of the full of meaning powers coming to you from God. This is because neither now is God felt except through deeds of reading, of meditation, of committing the good, though these deeds lose their importance in themselves, they must be increased in order the grace to increase too. Reached here, the man no longer reckons the food as important, but when eating he feels the presence of God and he sheds tears. All the things are full with God.

<sup>382</sup> Now, God Whom you have reached at, He is like a mountain elevated above the whole tiring road of the ascetic toils.

as we have been lightened by the fathers and by Scriptures, who entrusted us such a secret.

If you do not have deeds, you won't talk about virtues. This is for more honored are before the Lord the troubles for Him, than any prayer of sacrifice<sup>383</sup>. And the smell of the sweat of the troubles is above any aromatic. Therefore, you will reckon any virtue gained without the toil of the body as an inanimate garbage. The gifts of the righteous are the tears of their eyes. And their accepted sacrifice are their sighs during their vigils. The righteous will shout out towards the Lord under the burden of their suffering body and when in pain their asks addressed to God will cease, in the shouting out of their voice the holy groups will come to their help, in order to encourage them and to comfort them with the hope. This is for the holy angels become partakers to the suffering and to the troubles of the saints, by getting closer to them<sup>384</sup>.

The good work and the humble cogitation make the man a god on earth<sup>385</sup>. And his faith and his mercifulness make the man quickly advance towards cleanness. It is impossible one to find within a soul, concomitantly, the warmth and the crushing of the heart<sup>386</sup>, similarly to them who are drunk and unable to control their thoughts. This is for, when the soul is given this warmth, the crushing of the crying goes away from him. The wine has been bestowed towards gladness, and the warmth towards the joy of the soul. The wine warms up the body, and the word of God warms up the cogitation. They who burn in fever are kidnapped by the thought of the hope and they prepare their cogitation for the future age. This is for, like they who are drunk with wine hallucinate changing images, likewise

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<sup>383</sup> Enduring the troubles for God it is in itself the best prayer and sacrifice. And without enduring troubles the virtues won't be achieved, and the spiritual strength won't be achieved either.

<sup>384</sup> This is remarkable thought. The Holy angles become partakers to our sufferings for Christ, like Christ make on Himself partaker to our sufferings. This is for the angels too are imparted with the crucified Christ. There is a universal seen and unseen solidarity.

<sup>385</sup> In the consummate humbleness it is shown the fact that the man has been deified. Previously, Saint Isaac said that the humbleness is the coat of God (*Word XX*). He who shows how important he is, he surely has somewhere a weakness which he wants to cover it up with his pride. One could say that the pride is the coat of such a man's weakness. On the contrary, the humbleness is the coat of the power of God. The true greatness is covered up in humbleness.

<sup>386</sup> The warmth is the momentum towards the love for God. The crushing of the heart is the burdening conscience of the sin.

they who are drunk and warmed up by hope they know no trouble neither something worldly. These things and other similar things happen them who are simple in heart and warmed up by hope, after they have been working patiently and after they have been cleaned; these things have been prepared to them who walk the path of the virtues. But they occur also at the beginning of the road by the faith of the soul. This is for the lord does everything He wills<sup>387</sup>.

Blessed are they who have girded their waists with simplicity and without much spying for the sea of troubles, due to their love for God, and they haven't run away. These ones will be quickly delivered at the shore of the Kingdom and they will rest on themselves in the tent of them who live in asceticism, and they are souly guided through their difficulties and they will rejoice into the gladness of their hope. They who run with hope on the meandering way, they do not turn themselves back and they do not tarry into inquiring that path. And after they will have crossed the sea, by seeing the meanders they have been crossing through, they give thanks to God for He has delivered them from dangers and precipices and from the perils of the road, which they haven't been aware of. And among them who contrives many thoughts and who wanted to be very wise and who surrendered on themselves to some crafted livings and who allowed to be themselves dominated by fearful thoughts and who wanted to meet and to see in advance the damaging causes, most of them remain always at the doors of their houses<sup>388</sup>.

When sent on the road, the idle says: "There is a lion on my way and at the crossroads there is a thief" (Prov. 22: 13). He is like those who were saying: "We have seen some sons of giants and we were in front of them like some locusts" (Num. 13: 33). These ones are those who, at the time of the harvesting, they still on the way to the field; they are those who always

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<sup>387</sup> There are some people who, because of taking exaggerated caution, they never start walking the decided road of the salvation, because of constantly wanting to take other and other measures against any risk. These ones want to act too much as wisemen, and the death will come to them before they have even started walking the difficult road of the living according to God.

<sup>388</sup> When the work about the future realities is received with faith, it will strengthen the hope in this and it will make the cogitation drunk, by the joy that he will receive those. But it happens sometimes that this encouragement is provided by the godlike word at the beginning of the spiritual road, by being received with a steadfast faith. This is for our Lord can do this too, if He wills.

want to be wise<sup>389</sup>. That's why they never want to set a beginning. And he who is simple, he starts swimming and he crosses the sea in the first warmth of his soul, while not worrying at all about his body, neither questioning on himself if he will benefit something out of his work or not. Take heed not to be to you your much wisdom a sliding of your soul and a trap before you. But, by trusting God, you must mainly set a beginning to the road spread with blood<sup>390</sup>, in order you not to be always deprived and empty of God. "This is because he who fears or who waits for favorable winds, he won't sow" (Eccl. 11: 4). Better is the death for God than the life with shame and into idleness. When you want to set a beginning to the work of God, you must write your will in the first place, as one who will no longer live in this life, and like one who is preparing on himself to die and who no longer has any hope in the present life, but who has reached the end of the time granted to him. And you must truly cogitate that you must no longer be impeded by the hope for the life from here, from fighting and being victorious. This is because the hope for life it weakens the cogitation. That's why, do not try to be too wise, but you must give room to your faith into your thought and you must remember the many things from behind you and the untold centuries from after your death and judgment and so you won't ever be engulfed by drowsiness, according to the wiseman who says: "A thousand of years of the present age are like one day in the age of the righteous" (Ps. 89: 4<sup>391</sup>).

You must manly start every good thing and do not get closer to it hesitatingly, and do not doubt in you hear about your hope in God, in order not to be you toil useless and the work of your ploughing not to be difficult to you. But you must believe in you heart that our Lord is merciful, and like a good payer He bestows the grace them who are searching for Him, and He does that not according to our work but according to

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<sup>389</sup> It is not too good for the man to think too much at all the eventual hardships he will meet on the way of his living according to God (of the monasticism), before starting to walk on it. This is because many of those who do that, they won't even start walking on it but they will only remain looking at it from the door of their house.

<sup>390</sup> The struggle requires us ascetic toil to the sweat accompanied by blood. There is in this too a following of Christ.

<sup>391</sup> In KJB we have: Ps. 90: 4: "For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night."; in ROB we have: Ps. 89: 4: "For a thousand years before your eyes are like yesterday that passed and like the watch of the night". (E. l. t.'s n.)



the zeal and to the faith of our souls. This is for He says: "Be it to you according to your faith" (Mt. 8: 13).

And the works of them who live according to God are these ones: One hits on himself in the head during the entire day and instead of the hours of the religious service he spends his time doing that. Another, by persevering and remaining into kneelings, he does an equal number of prayers. Another replaced the religious services for the multitude of his tears and he is content with that. Another strives to understand the meanings and by that he fulfills the canon appointed to him. Another torments his soul with the hunger, to such an extent that he is unable to attend the religious services. Another, by persevering into fiery thinking at the content of the psalms, he thus fulfills his ceaseless service. Another spends his time in readings and his heart get hot by that. Another is enslaved by understanding the godlike meanings of the godlike Scriptures. Another, by being kidnapped by the wonders of the verses, he is stopped from his usual cogitation and he is taken in mastery by silence. But another, by tasting all of these and by getting satiated, he turned back to his previous things and he has remained doing nothing. Another tasted only a little from these, and, because of getting haughty, he was deceived. Another was impeded by his grave illness and by his helplessness from keeping his rule. Another is dominated by some habit or by his love for mastery, or by his vain-glory, or by his greediness for pilling up material things. Another stumbled and fell, but he got up again and he didn't run until he took the pearl of great price.

Therefore, you must always set a new beginning to the work of God, with joy and with zeal. And if you are clean of passions and of the hesitation of your heart, God Himself will take you to the top and He will help you and He will make you wise according to His will and you will be granted you consummation in a wonderful way. His be the glory and the mastery, now and forever and ever! Amen.

**Word LVII****About the Change Taking Place within Soul at Any Moment,  
Occurring there either Light or Darkness, or Exiting into  
the Realities from the Right Hand, or into those from the  
Left Hand**

Let's take a look, my beloved ones, within our soul at the time of our prayer, in order to see if we have sight in the verses which we are cogitating at, and of the prayer. This is for that sight comes out of the consummate quietude<sup>392</sup>. And during the time when we are in darkness, let's not get disturbed, especially if the cause of that doesn't belong to us. Then you will attribute that darkness to God's taking-of-care, due to reasons known only by God. This is because, during some periods of time, our soul is like chocked and like sinking into waves. With somebody read the Scripture, or he liturgizes (serves), either he gets closer to any other thing, darkness upon darkness comes upon him. In such cases the man leaves his work and often he will no longer want to come back to it. And he won't think, by any means, that there could happen to him certain change, neither that he will be even able to achieve the peace. At that time, he is filled up with despair and with fear; and his hope in God and the comfort from his faith are totally removed from within his soul. And he is wholly filled up with doubt and fear.

But they who have been tempted by the wave of that time they know by experience the change that will take place at the end of that temptation. This is for God doesn't allow the soul to be in those for a whole day, because if had been otherwise the Christians' hope would have been lost. But God brings a quick end to that. And if the disturbance of this darkness persists for a longer time, you still must wait for the change of your life, a change quickly coming right from the middle of your life. I am urging you, brother, and I am advising you that, if you do not have enough power to control on yourself and to fall on your face in prayer, then you will wrap your head with your cloak

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<sup>392</sup> The 'sight' is conditioned by quietude, and vice versa. When the soul remains into quietude, the soul will be kidnapped by sight and, vice versa, he who is kidnapped by sight he will enter the quietude and he will remain in there.

and get to sleep until the time of that darkness will pass away from you; but only do not leave your dwelling place.

To this temptation are submitted especially they who want to spend their life in a living according to the mind and who search for the comforting of their faith on this way<sup>393</sup>. That's why, this period of trial causes them pain and tiredness especially to these ones by the doubt it brought within their soul. And that is followed by an awful blasphemy. On this way, there occurs within someone the doubt in resurrection and in others, which we must not even mention. I experienced all these things for many times, and I have described this fight for comforting the many.

They who spend their life in bodily deeds are totally outside such trials, though. But to them comes the idleness which is obvious to everybody and it is divided in its sorts by the things mentioned before and by things similar to those. Its healing and the medicine for healing it spring out of quietude. This is the comforting of the one who is tempted by idleness. But one never receive the light of the comforting from the meetings and he won't be cured by the discussion with the people, but such things only rest him for a short while but then the idleness will rise up against him even more strongly<sup>394</sup>. He absolutely needs an illuminated man, who is experienced in such things, in order him to be lightened too and him to be always strengthened by faith; but he doesn't need that always.

Blessed is him who endures these while he is outside the gate. This is for, after that, he will reach the dwelling places and a big power<sup>395</sup>, as the fathers say. But this fight will pass in an hour or two. Neither the grace will consummately come at once to dwell within the soul, but only little by little. And the grace

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<sup>393</sup> They who live doing deeds they won't reach so easily to moments of despair. This is for these ones feel, up to a point, also a comforting and even a forgetfulness about temptations and trials. More exposed to this temptation are them who focus themselves on the work of the mind.

<sup>394</sup> The discussions with the people bring a little refreshing, being like some sort of distraction, but they do not heal the soul in depth by strongly attaching the thought to God; after a little while, there will come again the boredom of the idleness.

<sup>395</sup> Blessed is him who endures the troubles and who rejects the temptations and who fight for virtue outside the gate of the place where the resting of God is. This is because, without this patience and these toils, he won't be allowed to enter that gate, where he will be rested of them, while sunk into the light and love from Christ. This resting is on occasions entered by somebody even during the present life, the one who lives in ascesis. But one will definitively enter that only in the future life.

comes to us out of our fight. At one time there is the temptation, at another time there is the comforting. And the man spends his life into these until his death. Let's not except here to totally get rid of struggle, neither to be us consummately comforted. This is for God deigned thus to organize our life from here and they who walk the way are into this. His to be the glory forever and ever! Amen.

### Word LVIII

#### **About the Harm Caused by the Zeal of His Who Reckons that He Works for God. And about that help Coming out of Gentleness and of Other Kinds**

The zealous man never reaches the peace of his mind. And he who is deprived of peace he is deprived also of joy. This is for, if the peace is called as the consummate health of the mind, he who has ill zeal suffers of a grave illness<sup>396</sup>. Oh, you man, who reckon to uses your zeal against the foreign illnesses, by that you banish away the health of your soul. You better love the pain for the health of your soul. And if you want to heal the sick ones, you know that the patients need rather comforting than rebuking. And again, if you do not help others, you will sink on yourself painfully in a grave illness. The zeal is not born within people out of the ways of the wisdom, but out of the illnesses of the soul which are the narrowness of the cogitation and the much nescience<sup>397</sup>.

The beginning of the wisdom from God is the kindness and the gentleness. These ones are born in a great soul and they bear the people's helplessness. "You the strong, bear the helplessness of the weak" (Rom. 15: 1); and: "Correct him who mistook with the ghost of the gentleness" (Gal. 6: 1).

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<sup>396</sup> It is about some restless, agitated zeal, a fanaticism easily judging on others according to their external deviations from the right living. Until these days the Greeks call the zealous as fanatics.

<sup>397</sup> The fanaticism, the ill zeal, it is not born out of wisdom, but it is born out of the narrowness of the cogitation and out of much ignorance. The ill zeal is reckoned, as its causes too, an illness of the sou and a soul's lack of peace.

The Apostle mentions the peace and the patience among the fruits of the Holy Ghost. That heart that is full of sadness because of the weakness and because of the incapacity of fulfilling the seen bodily deeds, it takes the place for all the bodily deeds. The deeds of the body without the sadness of the mind are, though, a soulless body. He who is sad in his heart, but he has his senses uncontrolled, he is like a sick man who suffers bodily but he eats any damaging food nevertheless. He who is sad in his heart, but he is loosen at his senses, he is like a man having only one sun and stabbing him little by little with his own hands<sup>398</sup>. The mind's sadness is a precious gift in front of God. And he who wears the sadness as it is due, he is like a man wearing the holiness in his bones. That man who has a loosen mouth against people, for good and for bad things, he is not worthy of the gift of sadness. The repentance accompanied by meetings is like a vessel with holes. The generosity intertwined with offenses it is like a knife dipped in honey.

The righteousness and the discussion with some woman, it is like a lioness in a house together with a sheep. The deeds accompanied by mercilessness are before God as a man who tabs a son in front of his father. He who is sick in his soul but he corrects his companions, it is like a blind man guiding others.

The mercy and the right-judgment being together in a soul are like a blind man worshipping God and the idols in the same house. The mercy is opposite to the right-judgment. The right-judgment means applying the right-measure. This is for the right-judgment gives to each one according to his worthiness and it doesn't lean the scales, or it doesn't look at the face while rewarding. And the mercy is the pain moved by grace, that leans with together-suffering and that doesn't punish him who is worthy of punishment, and that overwhelms him who is worthy of good with abundant generosity. If the mercy is characteristic to justice, and the right-reckoning is characteristic to evilness, as the grass and the fire cannot inhabit the same place, likewise either the right-reckoning and the mercy cannot inhabit a soul together<sup>399</sup>. As a sand grain is

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<sup>398</sup> The sadness is his only quality but he kills that too, by the looseness of his senses.

<sup>399</sup> The right-reckoning appears as characteristic to the evilness when being merciless. Only the mercy is characteristic to the true justice. Of course, though, that if taken in itself the right-reckoning is better than the inequity. There is a gradation among virtues. The lowest virtue appears to be evil relatedly to the highest virtue. In this phrase the "justice" which the

not weighed against a bid quantity of God, likewise the right-judgment of God cannot be compared, regarding its likeness, to His mercy.

The mistakes of all people are like a handful of sand fallen into the sea<sup>400</sup>, in comparison to the Providence and to the mercy of God; and like a spring that flows abundantly won't be clogged by a handful of sand, likewise the mercy of our Make cannot be overwhelmed by the evilness of His creatures. He who keeps the evil in his mind and prays, he is like one who sows into the sea and then he expects to harvest<sup>401</sup>. As the flame of the fire cannot be stopped from going upwards, likewise the prayer of the merciful ones cannot be stopped from ascending to heavens. As the water flows when being on a slope, likewise the power of the anger spreads when finds room in our cogitation.

He who has achieved the humbleness within his heart, he has become death to the world. And he who has made on himself as dead to the world, he has become dead to his passions. And he who has made on himself as dead with his heart towards his things, he has made the devil himself as dead regarding him. He who has found the envy, he has found together with it the devil.

There is a humbleness due to the fear of God and there is a humbleness from God. One humbles on himself out of the fear of God and another humbles on himself out of joy. The humbleness out of the fear of God is followed by the kindness accompanied by well-ordered feelings, and by a heart that is always crushed. And the humbleness out of joy is followed by

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mercy belongs to it is take in the sense of the totality of the virtues or of the consummation, according to its meaning from the Holy Scripture. To be seen also the word of our Savior: "If your righteousness won't exceed that one of the scribes and of the Pharisees, you won't enter the Kingdom of Heavens" (Mt. 5: 20). So, the "righteousness" in this sense, which the mercy belongs to, and the righteousness as exactly measuring of the reward according to the merit, they cannot coinhabit the same house. This is because the legal justice doesn't reconcile with the "righteousness" as consummation of the man into God. the "righteous" Josephus is not righteous in the Pharisee's meaning, because those were judging with mercilessness any transgression of the law.

<sup>400</sup> Our mistakes are drowned into the ocean of the mercy of God and they do not mean anything in that ocean.

<sup>401</sup> The evilness is, at its turn, like a sea, or like a barren land, which the seed of the prayer cannot take roots in.

much simplicity and by a growing heart that no longer can be restrained<sup>402</sup>.

The love doesn't know the shame and therefore the love doesn't know to give a well-ordered countenance to its limbs<sup>403</sup>. It is natural to the love not to feel ashamed and not to hide up its measure. Blessed is him who has found you as shore to all joy. God loves the assembly of the humble ones as the gathering of the Seraphs, and more honored is at God a righteous body than a clean sacrifice. This is for both of them, namely both the humbleness and the righteousness, thy prepare to the soul a pledge of the Trinity.

Visit your friends decently. If you do it so, both you and your friends will benefit of your visits. This is because often by invoking the love the soul rejects the care for himself<sup>404</sup>. Guard yourself against meetings, because they are not beneficial all the time. In gathering, you must cherish your silence. This is for the inside war is easier than the external war<sup>405</sup>. Do not believe, brother, that the thoughts can be stopped inside, if the body is not kept in a good rule. You must fear your habit more that you fear your enemies<sup>406</sup>. He who nourished within himself the habit he is like that man who fuels up the fire. This is for the measure of the power of both of them consists of the matter which they are fed with. If the habit asks once to get into deed but its ask is not accomplished, on the second time you will see your habit weakened. And if you do the will of your habit once, on the second time you will see it more strengthened against you<sup>407</sup>.

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<sup>402</sup> A heart that grows into the love for God and for all the people and that can no longer be restrained or controlled in this urge for love.

<sup>403</sup> He who avoids manifesting his good sentiments towards the others he doesn't have yet enough love.

<sup>404</sup> This doesn't contradict what it has been say previously, that the love doesn't feel shame of manifesting itself. It is here about that care of himself of him who wants to encounter the people.

<sup>405</sup> It is easier to fight internally your impulse to speak, that to fight the war that you could initiate externally, between you and others, by saying something that they do not like.

<sup>406</sup> It is about the evil habits.

<sup>407</sup> The evil habit gets strengthened "against" the man, against man's freedom. The man gets callous because of it and he becomes rigid. The more the power of his habit increases, the more the man's power will be diminished – the man's power is manifested in the fluidity of his freedom. The man gradually is transformed from being a person to becoming something automatic; from a free being the man becomes a slave wearing chains. So the man's ghost will lock up within himself and so the man's spirit will exit the communication with the Holy Ghost.

Relatedly to any of your deeds, you must persevere to keep in your mind this memory. This is for it is better the help from the guarding than the help out of deeds. Do not make friends with him who like laughing and to make fun of people, because he will lead you to the habituation of the idleness. Do not get glad with him who is unrestraint in his way of living. But you must guard yourself against hating him. And if he wants to get up, you will give him a hand and you will take care of his rising until his death. But if yourself are sick, you won't try to heal another<sup>408</sup>. This is for he says: "Give him the end of your stick" and the others<sup>409</sup>. Before him who is proud and sick with envy, you take care of what you speak. This is for, while you are speaking, that one interprets in his language your words, as he wishes, and out of your good sayings he will take matter for offending others. And your words will be changed into his cogitation according to the sort of his illness. When somebody starts gossiping you brother in your presence, you will allow your sadness to be seen on your face. And by doing so, you will guard on yourself and you will be guarded in front of God and in front of that one.

If you give something him who need that, you will put on, before committing that deed, the gladness of your face. And you will comfort him with good words in his trouble. This is for by doing you so, your gladness will become in his thought more than your gift for the need of his body. On that day which you open your mind and you speak against somebody, you will reckon on yourself as dead in front of God<sup>410</sup> and you will reckon all your deeds as in vain, even though it could seem to you that your thought has rightly urged you to speak and you have spoken for teaching. This is because what need somebody to tear down his house for, in order to repair somebody else's house?<sup>411</sup>

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<sup>408</sup> If you are weak and you want to help another, you will risk to fall yourself into his passions. That's why, if that is the case, you won't try to help him in order you to avoid getting sick with the same passions as that one suffers of too; or, by suffering of the same illness, you will get even more ill.

<sup>409</sup> Give him the end of the stick which you have leaning on for a long time.

<sup>410</sup> When you speak against your brother, you will be death in front of God. This is because, by breaking up the communion of love with another, you have made on yourself incapable of the communion with God and you have locked up on yourself, for the rest of your life against that spring coming to you through that communion, a spring that is in the communion itself.

<sup>411</sup> Actually, he won't repair somebody else's house either. This is for the houses (the persons) are in communication. When one house collapses, another one is weakened or it collapses too.



On that you which you are sad for somebody, who is in a certain way helpless in the good things or against the evil things, either bodily, or in his thought, you reckon on yourself as martyr and you must feel yourself as suffering for Christ and as found worthy of confession. This is for you owe to remember that Christ died for the sinners, and not for the righteous. Think at how great that thing is. It is a great thing to get sad for the evil people and helping the sinners is greater than helping the righteous. The Apostle speaks about this like about a wonderful thing (Rom. 10: 7). If you can correct on yourself, within yourself, within your soul, you won't take a step of pursuing another righteousness<sup>412</sup>. Let the righteousness of your body and the cleanness of your conscience to precede all your deeds. This is because without these two anything is vain in front of God. Know that any deed which you do recklessly and without carefully assessing it, it will be in vain, regardless what decent it would seem like. This is for God reckons as righteousness the right-reckoning, and not the work without the right-reckoning<sup>413</sup>.

It is unwise to place a luminous candlestick in plain sunshine<sup>414</sup>. The prayer of him who keeps the evil in mind it is like a seed thrown on stone. The merciless ascetic is like a barren tree. The rebuking because of envy it is a poisonous arrow. The praise from the cunning one is a hidden trap. The insane adviser is like a blind guard. Spending your time with the unwise is a breaking of the heart. The discussion with the wisemen is like a sweet spring. The wise adviser is a wall of the hope. The insane and unskillful friend it is like a treasury full of losses. It is better seeing someone living with the crying ones than to see a wiseman following to an insane one. Better is the living together with the wild beasts than to live together with them who have bad behaviors. Better is the living together with

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<sup>412</sup> Do not try to make yourself right by correcting others. Strive to correct on yourself.

<sup>413</sup> Namely any deed must be done with a care of our accountability in front of God. This continuously ties the man to God.

<sup>414</sup> A meaning to this could be: not only thing that is good in itself it is also appropriate in any circumstances. Or, another meaning: the justice is surpassed by mercy and by love. Or, another meaning: do not teach them who are more taught than you are. And, especially, do not reckon that the explanations given by you to the godlike word from Scriptures or to the Church's dogmas or to the teachings of some holy men, those will bring a superior light to that already contained by the things you are trying to interpret. But you must present your explanations with humbleness and you must reckon them as unsure. This is what him who presents these explanations strives to feel himself too.

a vulture than that with a covetous and insatiable man. You better make friends with a killer than with a quarreling one. You better talk to a pig than to a covetous man. This is for better is the pigs' tray than the mouth of the greedy for food. You better sit together with the despised ones than with the haughty ones. Allow to be you persecuted and do not persecute. Allow to be you crucified and do not crucify. Allow injustice to be done to you and do not do injustices. Allow to be you gossiped and do not gossip. Be gentle and not zealous in evil.

The self-justification (self-defense) doesn't belong to the Christians' way of living and it is not mentioned by the teaching of Christ. Gladden yourself with them who gladden themselves and cry with them who cry. This is for this is the sign of the cleanness<sup>415</sup>. Be ill together with the ill ones. Cry together with the sinners. Rejoice together with them who repent themselves. Be friends with all people but be alone in your thought<sup>416</sup>. Be partaker to the sufferings of everybody but with your body be far from all of those<sup>417</sup>. Do not rebuke anyone and do not condemn even the very evil ones because of their way of living. Stretch your coat over him who has mistaken and cover him up.

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<sup>415</sup> The cleanness isn't a state of one isolated into his indifference, but it is a positive relation with others; it is a participation through kindness to their joys and pains, it is a self-framing within their lives. Being clean means existing for others, while being unclean means existing only for yourself, against others, or it means being indifferent to others.

<sup>416</sup> Be alone into your thought, in order you to see if you truly are friends with everybody, in order you to see if you have your roots deepened into God together with all the people. Take heed, in this way, to your responsibility, and check out your state whether it is good or bad. Be alone into your thought in order your thought not to deviate you in your judgment about yourself, the opinions expressed by others, who are superficial in their judgment. This is for, there, into that deep loneliness, you truly meet everybody. This is because, if you remain at the surface of the common noise, you won't be together with the others in a real manner and you won't live your responsibility towards them, but you will only be together with them in a superficial and passing manner and in a living torn apart by quarrels, by misunderstandings, and by egos; you keep yourself together with them like the wound remain together with a decomposing body.

<sup>417</sup> Suffer for their passions as those passions would be yours. But do not let those passions be within you. Suffer for the envy of the envious but do not be yourself envious. You must live in some kind of holy imagination; or, because it is not a mere imagination, you can suffer within yourself that state that causes within you such an imagination. We have Christ as our supreme example for this for He suffered more than anyone for their sins and He took their sins upon Himself but without becoming Himself a sinner. And example could be a mother suffering for the passions of her son even more than he does it, for the cleanness of her thought and her sharp responsibility for him give her a greater sensitiveness than his. The participative love surpasses the pains of him who lives in passions – the sufferings of the passionate are interrupted by the sweetness of his passions united with a certain confusion and bluntness.

And if you cannot claim his mistakes as being yours, and if you cannot receive the rebuking and the shame in his place, at least you suffer him and do not shame him up. Know, brother, that we must stay within our monastic cell in order not to know the evil deeds of the people, and so we will be able to see all the people as saints and kind into the cleanness of our cogitation. And if we rebuke and quarrel and judge and reproach and we try to avenge ourselves and to defame, what it is different through our dwelling place (our monastic cell or our monastery) than the dwelling places from the cities? And if we do not renounce to do these things, what will be worse than living into wilderness?

If you do not appease your heart, you must at least appease your tongue. And if you are incapable of setting your thoughts in order, you must at least put your sense in order. And if you are not alone in your thought, you must at least be alone with your body. And if you are incapable of working with your body you must at least be sad in your thought. And if you cannot stand while taking vigil you must take vigil at least while sitting on or even while laying on your bed. And if you cannot fast for two days, you must at least to fast until evening. And if you cannot fast until evening, you must at least guard yourself against getting satiated. If you are not clean in your heart, you must be at least clean to your body. If you do not cry within your heart, you must at least dress you face up with sadness<sup>418</sup>. If you cannot give alms, you must at least speak like a sinner<sup>419</sup>. If you are not peacemaker, you must at least not love the disturbance. If you are not zealous, you must at least not to become idle in your thought<sup>420</sup>. If you are not victorious (upon your sins), you must at least not to get haughty in front of the guilty. If you cannot shut up the mouth of him who gossips your companion, you must at least guard yourself against being partaker to that gossip.

You know that fire comes out of you and that fire burns others, and the souls burnt into your fire will be asked for by

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<sup>418</sup> This is not hypocrisy for you sincerely want to cry, but you cannot cry yet. Hypocrite is him who does this in order to deceive others. We often must force our body in order us to produce within our souls the corresponding states.

<sup>419</sup> Speak by recognizing your sin that you haven't given alms, or that you cannot give alms to another.

<sup>420</sup> You must at least condemn your idleness in your thought.

God from your hand<sup>421</sup>. And even if it is not yourself who throws that fire, but you consent to that and you feel pleasure in that, you will be partaker to the judgment. If you love the gentleness, you will remain in peace. And if you are found worthy of peace, you will rejoice all the time. You must search for wisdom and not for gold. You must dress yourself up in humbleness and not in silk. You must try to gain the peace and not the reigning.

There is no wiseman not having the humbleness. And he who has not humbleness he won't get wise. There is no one humble in thought who to be deprived of peace. And he who lacks the peace he won't be humble in thought either. And somebody won't have peace if he doesn't rejoice on himself. On all the ways the people walk in the world, the people won't have no peace within them, until they get close, by hope, to God. The heart won't gain peace out of tiredness and offenses, until the hope start dwelling within it and until the hope doesn't bring peace of the heart and it doesn't pour joy within heart. This is what the Lord called as mouth in state of worshipping and full of holiness. "Come to Me all of you who are tired and burdened and I will rest you" (Mt. 11: 28). "Come closer, he says, in order you to hope in Me and you will be rested of anything and of any fear".

The hope in God elevates the heart, and the fear of Gehenna crushes the heart. The light of the mind gives birth to faith and the faith give birth to the comforting from the hope. And the aspiration strengthens the heart. The faith is the unveiling of the understanding<sup>422</sup>. And when the cogitation gets darkened, the faith will hide itself up and the fear will come upon as and it will cut our hope off<sup>423</sup>. Not that faith coming from learning it liberates the man of pride and doubt, but that faith that sees and that sprouts out of understanding and it is call the recognition and the showing of the truth. Until the mind understand God as God unveiled to understanding, the fear won't come close to the heart. When we are forsaken into

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<sup>421</sup> This is an interpretation of the fire that deserves to be memorized. It is precious for the understanding of the hell's fire. The sin is itself a fire that desolates and torments the soul of him who commits that sin.

<sup>422</sup> The faith is produced by the grace of the revelation, but only by the fact that it wakes up the understanding within the soul. So that the faith is like a meeting point between grace and understanding.

<sup>423</sup> Here is being done a tight connection between faith and the true understanding the meaning of the life.

darkness and when we lose this understanding, there will occur within us the fear until we will get humble again, until we will come closer to humbleness and to repentance.

The Son of God endures the cross. That's why we the sinners have daring into repentance. This is for if the simple way of the repentance removed the anger from King Ahab, our true sin won't either be useless to us. And if the simple countenance of the humbleness removed the anger from that one who didn't truly repent, how much more will it remove from us who get truly sad for our mistakes? This is for the sadness of our thought keeps the place for all the bodily word.

Saint Gregory says: "He who has sunk on himself into God and who perseveres in the care for His judgment, he is church of the grace". But what is him who has sunk on himself into God and who perseveres into the care for His judgment? What does it mean the care for God's judgment if not always searching for His resting and ceaselessly getting sad because of not being able to reach the consummation because of the weakness of our nature? And the ceaseless sadness of somebody for this it means bearing into his soul the ceaseless remembrance of God, as the blessed Basil said. The unscattered prayer is that bringing within soul the luminous benevolence of God. This is the dwelling of God: to have God sown within yourself through His remembrance<sup>424</sup>. And so, we can make on

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<sup>424</sup> The Fathers do not reckon the thought at God or God's remembrance, and therefore the prayer too, as separated from God. But they see in the thought at God and in remembering God and in the faith of God His presence and His work as such. Saint Basil said too: "The dwelling of God is to have God implanted within the self by remembrance". (*Epistle II*, G.P. 32, col. 229). God Himself produces within us His remembrance, and He upholds our thinking at Him; of course, not without our effort. This teaching is solidary to that about the feeling of the contact with God through a sense of the mind, or of the soul. And it connected to that about the uncreated energies of God. But it is also connected with the understanding of God as Person Who, by listening to our word, He will necessarily answer it in a way or another. As are tied and communicate among themselves the human persons by word, likewise the human persons communicate with God, by word, by an answer-word to the word of God, and even through the thought that is an unvoiced word. This gave the cult a signification of communication between they who pray and God. It is thus explained the sanctifier function of the cult as composed of prayers as answers to the words of God, or which are answered by God. For an even more clarifying explanation of this communication between them who pray and God, by remembering God, and by prayer, by word, we could think at the capability of the human subject to perceive through his brain, intensified by a reception apparatus, communications from all quarters, where such communications are emitted from. It is true that the human subject perceives these communications through the reception apparatus one at a time. But when we perceive a choir of know persons, we perceive, in the same time, their voices in what those voices has as distinct. It is thus how a

ourselves church of God. And this is the care and the crushed heart as preparation for our resting into God. Him it is due the glory forever and ever! Amen.

## **Word LVIX**

### **About the Many Changes Following within Mind and which Are Tested by Prayer**

Choosing the good will is characteristic to him who wants that. But to consummate the good will it belongs to God<sup>425</sup>. And he who makes this choice he needs the help from God. That's why to the desire that has been born within us we must make to follow the ceaseless prayer. Not only because we need help, but also in order to make us discerning if this desire of ours is according to the pleasure of God or not. This is because not all the good desire occurs within heart from God. But only the useful one. This is because it happens sometimes that the man desires a good and God doesn't help him. This is because it comes also from the devil such desires. And it is reckoned helpful but it often is not on the measure of the man. But the devil plots to harm the man and the devil forces the man to try and fulfill that desire without the man having reached that living appropriate to his desire. Or that desire can be stranger to that man's way of living; or it hasn't arrived yet the time for fulfilling it, or to put it in work; or he isn't able to accomplish it with the work, or with the knowledge, or with his body; or the time doesn't help us; or in any way, under the countenance of that good the devil disturbs or harms that man in his ghost, or the devil hides him a trap in his cogitation.

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parent perceives, in the laughter, in the crying, in the playing, in the common ask of his children, all of them together but still distinctively. Only for the human spirit has in himself this reception power, the human spirit has also within the brain, or within the reception technical apparatus, a means for actualizing this power of his. But the human subject is in the image of the Godlike Subject. God can perceive concomitantly all the thoughts and all the prayers, distinctively, and God can answer them.

<sup>425</sup> Choosing the good sometimes belongs to God. But to persevere in that state it belongs to God. And we can achieve the ceaseless help from God through ceaseless prayer. Thus, Saint Isaac sees a purpose of the ceaseless prayer in ceaselessly persevering in good.

But, as I said, let's make ceaseless prayers for the good desire occurred within us and let's each of us to say: "You will be done, until I will finish the good thing that I desire to do, if it is pleasant to Your will. This is because willing it is easy to me, but doing it, without the gift coming from you, I cannot. But only if both of them are from You: to will and to work. This is because without Your grace I wouldn't have convinced myself to accept this desire that has moved within me, but I would have rather been scared of it".

This is the custom of him who desires the good: to work with right-reckoning (with discernment) of mind through prayer, in order him to be helped in this work, and him that receive wisdom which he to be able through to discern between truth and lie. This is because the good is proven through many prayers, in work, in guarding, in the restless desire, in ceaseless tears, in humbleness, and in the help from above that comes especially when not impeded by our thoughts of pride. This is because our thoughts of pride impede the help from God towards us. But we can remove such pride thoughts by praying.

## **Word LX**

### **About the Unwilling Evil Thoughts Occurring out of the Looseness Given Them by Idleness that Precedes Them**

There are some people who lean their body and who want to rest their body a little for the work of God, until they get strengthened again and they turn again back to their work. But on the few days of our resting let's not totally forsake our guarding and let's not give whole looseness to our soul as we would be some people who no longer want to turn back to their work. Because if we did so, we would be beaten at the time of the peace by the enemy's arrows and we would gather within our souls the daring of our will and a defiled coat in the holy land, namely into prayer, by reckoning that we are dressed up. And this would be what moves our soul when cogitating at God and in prayer. These are the things we would achieve during our laziness and these ones shame us during prayer.

The watchfulness helps the man more than his deed does, and the looseness harms the man more than the resting harms him. This is because out of resting there occur wars within the man and they disturb him, but only he has the power to untie them (to let them go). This is because when the man leaves the resting and he turns back in the world of the deeds, the wars get far from him and they run away. But it doesn't happen like so to what is born out of that looseness caused by idleness and resting. As long as the man still is in the world of his resting, he can turn back again and he can guide on himself to the state of his order. This is for he still is within the borders of his freedom. But if the man didn't totally throw his guarding from himself, he wouldn't be pushed unwillingly under the power of the force to surrender on himself to the things which do not rest him. If the man didn't exit by himself totally from the land of the freedom, there wouldn't occur so many happenings which tied him forcedly and which he couldn't resist<sup>426</sup>.

Do let give freedom, oh, man, to any of your senses, lest you won't be able to take your senses under control again<sup>427</sup>. The resting harms only the young men. But the looseness harms even the consummate and old men. They who have come from resting to evil thought, they can again turn themselves back to guarding and to stay in their high way of living; but they who, by getting lazy in their guarding, due to the trust in their deeds, they have passed from their high way of living to the looseness of their way of living, they have been enslaved.

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<sup>426</sup> In the whole this chapter has been made and it will continue to be made a difference between the resting which the monk can grant to himself from time to time, from his self-supervision and from his tight asceticism, in order to strengthen his body for a little, and the looseness one grants to his passions which will start uprising and which the monk won't be able to keep under control. By the last thing the monk ceded his freedom, and as consequence to that the monk will be forcedly driven to sins. It is worthy to be memorized the connection seen by the author between the man's self-supervision and his freedom, or between self-control and freedom. He who doesn't control on himself, he will be controlled by inferior impulses or by the forces of the evil. He who doesn't control on himself he will become the slave of a foreign mastery. The freedom means self-control. That's why, in the Greek language, these two terms have the same meaning: *αυτεξούσιον – ελευθερία*.

<sup>427</sup> You have given freedom to one of your senses, that sense will overwhelm your freedom by his freedom, and nobody know whether you will be able to regain your freedom. By the freedom given to a sense, you have made on yourself as a slave to the things which the respective sense enters the contact with, in union. You have ceded to your sense your self-control.



One, after he fought in the country of the enemies, he died in time of peace<sup>428</sup>. Another, getting out of the monastic way of life on motif of trade, he receives a spike in his soul<sup>429</sup>. Let's not get sad when we slip into some mistake, but when we persevere in that mistake. This is for the sliding can happen even to the consummate ones; but persevering in mistake is complete death. And that sadness which we get sad with, for our slidings, it will be counted to us instead of clean work by grace. But he who, in the hope of his repentance, the slides for the second time, he behaves cunningly to God. To this one his death will come unnoticedly and he won't last until that time which he hoped to fulfill the deeds of the virtue at<sup>430</sup>. Everyone who has untied his senses he has untied his heart too.

**Here He Is Speaking about the Insanity of Them Who Are Hypocrite in Front of God. And He Shows which the Sings of that Insanity Are**

The work of the heart is accompanied by the tying of the external limbs and if somebody does that with right-reckoning (with discernment) it is proven, according to the sayings of the fathers from before us, out of the strange showings occurring within him, that he is not tied to the material earning, neither he loves the covetousness of his belly, and the anger is totally foreign to him. This is because where these three are: the

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<sup>428</sup> He fought the wars of the passions and he was victorious. But then, by granting to himself a little resting, he has been defeated.

<sup>429</sup> Here maybe is not about him who leaves the live of asceticism for a little rest, but it could be about him who gets out in order to buy a little strengthening by meeting others, for some bodily earning. He receives a spike from the passions.

<sup>430</sup> Kierkegaard insisted upon the necessity not to postpone a good thought, because that leads to the continual postponing (Einübung im Christentum). Here is something different: you must not commit sin hoping to a new repentance and forgiveness, for the second time, after you have achieved, by repentance, the forgiveness for the first time you sinned. If you continue sinning, that will make you not to take the sin too seriously; or you will take your sins in an increasingly less serious manner. And you will do the same relatedly to your repentance. You will fall into a relativizing of the sin and of the life's seriousness, and you will fall on the plan of the platitude and of the sophisticated and cheap justifications. In addition to that, you will behave cunningly towards God, by promising Him when you ask for forgiveness that you will no longer sin, but underneath that promise you are thinking, even in the moment of your promise, at a new sinning, so that you are lying to God, or you are attempting to deceive God.

material earning (either big or small), the anger, and the defeat from the part of the belly's covetousness, even if one seems like the saints from old, you will know that because of the impatience of the internal things there happen the looseness of the external things, instead of the diverse contempt of the own soul<sup>431</sup>. And if not, how did he despise the bodily things, and how couldn't he achieve the gentleness? The despising with right-reckoning it is followed by the fact of not allowing to be himself tied by anything, as also the contempt for the resting and for the longing for people. And if somebody is prepared to joyfully take losses for God, that one is clean inside. And if he doesn't despise somebody for his blindness, he will be truly free. And he who doesn't come close to him who honors him, and neither he gets disgusted by him who dishonors him, he has died to the world in the present life. The guarding of the right-reckoning (of the discernment) is better than any living worked in any way and according to any measure of the people.

### **About the Need for Not Hating the Sinner, but for Crying and for Praying for Him**

Do not hate the sinner. This is because all of us are guilty. And if you move yourself towards the sinner for God, you will cry for the sinner. And why do you hate the sinner for? You must hate his sins and you must pray for him, in order you to liken yourself to Christ Who didn't get angry against the sinners and Who prayed for them. Can't you see how Christ prayed for Jerusalem? This is because of being us too mocked by the devil in many things. And why do we hate him who is mocked as we are, by the devil who mocks both of us? Why do you hate the sinner, oh, man? And where is your righteousness since you no longer have love<sup>432</sup>? This is because out of their nescience some

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<sup>431</sup> It seems that, by taking in consideration the next phrase as well, that here is not about the soul in a proper sense, but it is about the soul's works referring to the body. He whom the passions of the covetousness, and of the material earning, and of the anger are stirred up in, he proves not to despise the exaggerate care for his body. This is because, if he despised that, how could he not achieve the gentleness?

<sup>432</sup> The true justice is love. That justice that is separated from love it is an inferior virtue, one characteristic to us after we have sinned.

people move in their anger, though they reckon that they discern the deeds of the sinners<sup>433</sup>.

Be you herald of the kindness of God, for God guides you who are unworthy and for you are much indebted to God, and God doesn't get your soul away from you. And for the small things you do God bestows you the great things. Do not call God as "just", because of not being sin His righteousness in your deeds<sup>434</sup>. And if David calls God as "just", His Son showed us that God is rather kind and gentle. "He is good, he says, to the evil and non-honoring" (Lk. 6: 35). How do you call God as "just" when you read in the chapter about the payment given to the workers: "My friend, I am not going injustice to you, but I want to give to this last one as I have given to you. If your eye is evil, I am kind" (Mt. 20: 23)? And, again, how could you call the man of God as "just", when you hear in the chapter about the prodigal son who spent his richness in parties, that only for the repentance showed by that prodigal son his father ran and fall in his arms and he gave his son mastery over the whole his wealth? No one else told these things about Him, so that we would have reasons to doubt Him, but Himself His Son confessed these things about Him. Where is the justice of God, while Christ died for us despite us being sinners? And if He shows here on Himself to us as merciful, let's believe that He won't change on Himself in that regard.

God forbid us from ever cogitating this lawlessness of saying that God is merciless. This is for God doesn't change on Himself in what is characteristic to Him, as the dead do<sup>435</sup>, and neither achieves God something that He doesn't have, nor He loses what He has, neither He receives some adding as the creatures do. But that what God has been having since the beginning, He always has that and He will have that until the endless end, as the Blessed Cyril said in his interpretation to the Genesis. "Fear yourself, he says, of Him out of your love and not because of the harsh name given to Him. Love Him as one who owes to love Him; and not only for the things which He is going to give you, but also for the things which you have received from Him and for this world which He made it for us.

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<sup>433</sup> It is a nescience that one that reckons that discerns sinful deeds in someone's life. It might be that people are not like that within themselves. The souly life of the man is so complicated!

<sup>434</sup> God gives you more than you deserve according to your deeds. In your deeds unpunished by God, you must rather see His love.

<sup>435</sup> Like the mortal, like them who bear the dead within themselves.

This is for who could reward God? Where it is His rewards in our deeds? Who persuaded Him in the beginning to create us? And who begs Him for us when we are ingrate? And when we didn't' exits, who woke our body up to life? And again, where the understanding of the knowledge comes into the dust from?"

O, wonderful mercy of God! O, non-understood grace of God Who is our Builder! O, power that can do everything! O, immeasurable kindness, which You creates anew the nature of us the sinners! Who can extoll God as it is due? God raises him who transgressed to Him and who blasphemed Him, God renews the without-rationality dust and He makes it again understanding and speaking; and God makes the insensitive mind and the scattered senses to be again rational nature and skillful in understanding. The sinner is unable to understand the grace of his resurrection. Where is the Gehenna that can make us sad? Where is that punishment that scares us in many ways and that can overwhelm the joy of His love? What is the Gehenna in comparison to the grace of His resurrection, when He raises us out of hell and He makes this corruptible to be dressed up in incorruptibility and He raises the fallen one into glory<sup>436</sup>?

O, you who have right-reckoning! Come and wonder! Who has a wise and wonderful cogitation in order him to worthily wonder about the grace of our Maker? He is the rewards of the sinners<sup>437</sup>, for instead of the just reward he rewards them with the resurrection; and He dresses up with the glory of the incorruptibility on their bodies which transgressed His law. This grace that has resurrected us after we have sinned, it is greater than that grace which He has brought us to existence when we haven't existed. Glory to You, Lord, for Your immeasurable grace! The waves of Your grace make me shut up, My Lord. This is because of not being in mind any more thought on the measure of thanks owed to You. What thought will we confess to You with, You all-kind Emperor Who loves our life? Glory to you for the two world which You made towards our growth and

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<sup>436</sup> Here it is about the Gehenna and the hell where all people went before the resurrection of the Lord.

<sup>437</sup> On the sinners according to the ancestral sin, who come to Him, instead of punishing them he rewards them with His grace.

joy, by elevating us through all the things You have done towards the knowledge of Your glory, from now and forever<sup>438</sup>.

## Word LXI

### **How One Can Guard the Hidden Watchfulness Born within Soul; and what the Sleep and the Indifference Enter Like, into Cogitation, and what They Quench Like that Holy Warmth from within Soul and What they Kill Like the Desire for God and the Warmth for the Spiritual and Heavenly Things**

It is impossible that they who have good desires to be impeded by some resistance to accomplish those good desires of theirs, if the enemy doesn't find place for sowing some cause seemingly good, within them who desire the good. And this is this: To any thought of some good desire, at the beginning if its movement, there will follow a certain zeal, alike to the lit coals. And this zeal uses to surround this thought and to banish away from its closeness any resistance and impediment and obstacle existing in its way. This is for this zeal has a great and untold strength and power, in order to always defend the soul against drowsiness, or against getting scared of the impulses of all the things from around.

This first thought is the power of the holy desire that is naturally sown in the soul's nature. And this zeal is the thought moved by the power of the wrath which is within it, and that is placed by God within us, in order to guard the borders of the nature, in order the wrath to set in motion the thought of the freedom in order to fulfill the natural desire manifested within soul<sup>439</sup>. And this is the virtue<sup>440</sup>, which the good is not worked

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<sup>438</sup> In the Romanian newer translation there are added, inappropriately, three more paragraphs which coincide to others form the next *Word*.

<sup>439</sup> The wrath is sown within nature on a positive purpose" that of defending the rational nature against falling off its border, and in order the wrath to urge us to fulfill our good aspirations. The wrath moves, in the first place, the freedom on this purpose; without the wrath, the freedom remains a simple potentiality.

<sup>440</sup> The desire towards good, sown within our nature, by having the zeal within, and by being associated with the wrath, it is the virtue in potentiality, it is the undeveloped virtue, but one having in the beginning in it the movement towards becoming actualized as virtue.

without. This is called as zeal for it is that one that moves and that makes zealous and that lights up and that strengthens the man, from time to time, to despise the body in time of trouble and in time of fearsome temptations coming in its way, and to always give his soul to death and to face the opposite power in pursuing to accomplish that thing strongly desired by the soul.

A certain saint, who put on Christ, he called this zeal with his words as “watchdog” of the law of God. And this is the virtue. This is for itself the virtue is called as law of God<sup>441</sup>. And this power of the zeal is strengthened and it is wakened up and it is lightened up towards guarding the house, on two ways. And it weakens again and it fall asleep and it gets lazy also in two modes.

On the first way, the wakening up and the lighting up are produced when there appropriately occurs a fear into the man’s thought, one that makes him fear for the good he has earned or which he is going to earn, lest he will be stolen or robbed by something among the things accompanying or following that good thing. And this takes place through God’s taking-of-care – I mean, the fear – within all of them who truly work the virtue, towards a wakening up and towards a zeal persisting without soul without falling asleep.

And when this fear is moved within nature, the zeal – called by us as “watchdog” will burn day and night as a lit-up oven and it will keep our nature awake. It stays awake in the likeness of the Cherubs and it takes heed at the surrounding things on each moment. And like the (mentioned) saint says, if a bird passes by, it will go around that bird and it will shout out at that bird with a harsh and untold impulse. And itself this fear occurs because the man has doubted in his faith about the taking-of-care of God and because the man has forgotten that God occupies on Himself with them and that God takes care of them who lives in ascesis for virtue, in order God to visit them on each moment, as the Holy Ghost says too through the mouth of the Prophet: “The eye of the Lord upon the righteous ones” and the others. And again: “The Lord is the strength of them who fear Him” (Ps. 24: 15<sup>442</sup>). Himself the Lord said, as from

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<sup>441</sup> Starting with this phrase, what follows in the newer translation of the manuscript is placed at the end of the previous *Word*. The virtue if the embodied law of God.

<sup>442</sup> In KJB we have: Ps. 25: 14: “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.”; in ROB we have: Ps. 24: 15: “The Lord is the strengthening of them who fear Him, and He will show His settlement to them.” (E. l. t.’s n.)

Himself, to them who fear Him: "There won't come near to you evil things and the whip won't come near to your dwelling place" (Ps. 8: 10<sup>443</sup>).

And when the fear occurs for the soul, for the things which can happen for and follow to the virtue, in order the virtue not to be stolen or harmed because of some reason, that fear will be a godlike thought and a good worry and its sadness and torment are out of the taking-of-care from God.

And, again, there is the second kind (of waking up the zeal), namely of strengthening and making the dog take vigil. It is that when the desire for virtue grows up with soul. This is for the more the desire grows up within soul, the more this watchdog will become fierier and more attentive, and that's is the natural zeal for virtue<sup>444</sup>.

And the first cause of somebody getting indifferent consists of the fact that this desire ceases or it diminishes within soul. And the second one consists of the fact that some confident and daring thoughts enters the soul and it remains within the soul, and it also consists of the fact that the man hopes and thoughts and reckons that he has no reason to fear of some power which could ham him. This is because, by that he throws from himself the weapons of the zeal and his house becomes unguarded. And the watchdog falls asleep and it leaves the guarding for a long time.

Because of this thought are stolen most of the houses which are thoughts with the mind (intelligible). And this happens when it gets darkened the cleanness of the light of the holy knowledge from within our soul. And where this darkening is coming from? This is because a very subtle thought entered our soul and it denned there, or because the man has been occupying on himself for a long time with the worries for the passing things, or because of the continuous meeting with the world, that deceives the man, or because of his belly that is the

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<sup>443</sup> In KJB we have: Ps. 32: 6: "For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him."; in ROB we have: "For that every pious will pray to You at the right time, and the flood with much water won't come near to him."; another possibility would be: KJB: Ps. 91: 7: "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee."; in ROB: Ps. 90: 7: "There will fall a thousand at your side and ten thousands on your right side, but they won't come neigh to you". (E. l. t.'s n.)

<sup>444</sup> Until here, in the Romanian newer translation this text is added to the previous *Word*, and the present *Word* continued without these paragraphs, starting only from what follows to this.

master of all evil things. This is because always when he who lives in asceticism he meets the world, his soul will immediately weaken. Likewise, when he meets many people, and he is driven only by the need of his vain-glory, his soul will be shattered. And if we are to say this briefly, the mind of his who has exited the world, when he meets the world, his mind will be like that helmsman sailing on a peaceful sea and suddenly he falls among rocks and he drowns. And may belong to our God the glory, and the mastery, and the honor, and forever and ever! Amen.

## Word LXII

**About the Three Kinds of Knowledge<sup>445</sup> and about the Differences Regarding Their Works and about Their Meaning;’ and about the Faith of the Soul and about that Mysterious Richness Hidden within the Soul; and about What Different Is Like the Knowledge of this World, in Its Kinds, from the Simplicity of the Faith**

That soul that walks of the paths of the good living and of the faith and who has advanced much in them, if that soul turns back again to the knowledge modes, that soul will immediately start limping in his faith, and his understanding power will be deprived his of faith. And this power cannot show itself to the soul in the understandings listed in that clean soul who walks in it without inquiring the happening things, by the simplicity of his faith. But that soul that is forever surrendered to God through faith and through much trial (experience) and that received the tasting of God’s help, that soul will no longer

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<sup>445</sup> These three kinds of knowledge can refer to three knowledge domains: the body, the soul, and the spiritual life, as the Saint Isaac is going to say a little further. But they mean, therefore, three knowledge plans and three knowledge modes of kinds. It seems that in no case they represent the scientific knowledge of the nature in the sense that the knowledge it was developed only in the following centuries. The three knowledge kinds as mentioned by Saint Isaac still represent a knowledge of the nature in a broader meaning of the word, as differing from the godlike supra-natural, as reserved to the faith. As such, the sciences use methods which the faith doesn’t need, the faith being a simple noticing of the godlike reality. Still, the knowledge of the spiritual life meets the faith.



take care of himself. This is for the awe and the quietude shut his mouth up and that soul will no longer have the power to turn back again to the craftsmanships (modes, methods) of his knowledge and to move himself among those, let's by those ones' resistance the soul to be deprived of the taking-care from God Who ceaselessly and hiddenly visits that soul and He takes care of that soul and He accompanies that soul on all ways. And if the soul still does that, it means that that soul has gone crazy, by reckoning that himself could take of himself by the power of his knowledge. On the opposite, they whom the light of the faith has dawned within, they shy to pray for themselves any longer, or to ask from God "Give us this, or remove from us that". They no longer take care of themselves in any way. This is because they see with the understanding eyes of the faith, on each moment, the parental taking-of-care overshadowing them out of that true Father Who overwhelms in His great immeasurable love all the parental love and He can more than all others to give us the help abundantly, more than we ask for, and more than we thing and understand.

Thus, the knowledge is opposite to the faith. This is for the faith is, in all its aspects, an untying (a liberation) from the laws of the knowledge, of course not of the laws of the spiritual knowledge. This is because the border fencing the knowledge (the definition of the knowledge) is that there cannot be done anything outside inquiring and research, but the knowledge studies if it is possible, it to do what it thinks at and what it wants. And what the faith is? When somebody doesn't come closer to the faith in a right manner, the faith won't convince him to remain in it<sup>446</sup>.

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<sup>446</sup> 'Rightly so, when somebody doesn't come closer to the faith in a right manner, but without respect and in ghost of spying, the faith won't lighten him up with its light, but it will lock himself up again in the darkness of the faithlessness". The faith refers to the domain of the inward realities of the person. When somebody doesn't come closer to the person with respect and with love the person won't open to him. The person cannot be conquered by the aggression of the analyzes, as in case of the objects, but only through the reality of the bilateral communion, through the willing relation from person to person. While the domain of the knowledge is fenced up by the laws of the created nature submitted to experiments and analyzes, but by that is a limited domain, the domain of the faith is fenced up by the person's freedom; but when the person wants to communicate it, it proved to be unlimited. This domain explains also the rationality of the created nature. That's why the faith softens up, or it overwhelms the laws of the knowledge of the nature. The faith knows the realities submitted to the laws from a position that is superior to the laws. Of course, that this is a certain

One cannot accumulate knowledge without research and without using the methods. And that's why we doubt the knowledge's truth<sup>447</sup>. And the faith requires a clean and simple thought and stranger to any craftsmanship and research by using methods. Do you see how they oppose to one another? The house of the faith is a little-child's understanding and a simple heart. "This is for in the simplicity of their heart, he says, they worshipped the Lord" (Col. 3: 22). "And if you do not turn yourself back and become like children, you won't enter the Kingdom of Heavens (Mt. 18: 3). And the knowledge is the enemy and the opposite of these two<sup>448</sup>.

The knowledge is the fence (definition) of the nature<sup>449</sup>, guarding the nature in all its ways<sup>450</sup>. And the faith travels above-nature. The knowledge doesn't try to come closer to any work that disregards (transgresses) the nature, but the knowledge stay away from such work. But the faith accepts that easily and says: "Upon asp and basilisk you will trample and on lion and on dragon you will mount on" (Ps. 91: 13<sup>451</sup>). The knowledge is followed, because of that, by fear<sup>452</sup>; and the faith

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meaning of the knowledge, because in another meaning the knowledge of the content of the person and the knowledge of the Divine Person by revelation, they still are knowledge.

<sup>447</sup> The meaning of this sentence is multiple" a) the truth is an more essential domain and on it depends what is comprised in the frame of the laws of the created nature, And because through knowledge and therefore through the knowledge's methods, we notice only the last part, we doubt the other domain, namely the domain of the truth; b) Right in the fact that we start finding the truth out of nature, through methods, we start from doubt; c) we always doubts about the fact that the methods which we have used have been the best for finding out the truth; d) we doubt about the fact whether the unfound truth doesn't make problematic the found fragmentary truth.

<sup>448</sup> The knowledge is enemy and to the full understanding and to entering the Kingdom of Heavens. Until here, Saint Isaac specified this difference between knowledge and faith: the knowledge is earned through research methods while the faith is achieved by the simple trust of the clean heart into God. It is a difference of souly states and of modes of achieving. The knowledge asks on itself if what does not it can be fulfilled, while the faith doesn't ask if that can be fulfilled on the basis of the nature's laws; but the faith trusts the power of God.

<sup>449</sup> The knowledge is applied to the nature that is fenced up by the involuntary laws of the repetition. That's why, there where is knowledge there will be fencing up, there will be "definition". The exactness of the knowledge is paid with it narrowness and repetition.

<sup>450</sup> The knowledge provided us with the prescience of the mode which the things are done and undone, in order us to be able to orient on ourselves among the things.

<sup>451</sup> In KJB we have: Ps. 91: 13: "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet."; in ROB we have: Ps. 90: 13: "Upon asp and basilisk you will tread and you will step upon lion and dragon". (E. l. t.'s n.)

<sup>452</sup> The knowledge of the nature, by referring to the laws leading the person during the person's earthly existence, to the unavoidable death, it is followed by fear. The faith that knows about the future life it is followed by hope. In another senses, the knowledge fears

it followed by hope. This is for the more somebody remain to the knowledge's methods, the more will he tied by fear and the more he won't be found worthy of being free from knowledge. But he who follows to the faith is free and master and he uses – as a son of God – the freedom in all his deeds, by being master upon himself<sup>453</sup>. That man who loves the faiths he uses as God does, all the realities of the nature. This is for the faith gives the man power to make the new creation, in the likeness of God<sup>454</sup>. “You wanted, he says, and all the thing stood before you” (Job 13: 23). And the man often can make all things from inexistent things. But the knowledge cannot do something without matter. The knowledge doesn't dare to do something that is not given to the matter. And why is that? This is because the flowing nature of the water doesn't hold on its back the weight of the body and he who comes closer to fire he will be burnt, and if somebody dared to do these things we would endanger on himself<sup>455</sup>.

Through these the knowledge is guarded within the nature's borders and it doesn't dare to cross over its borders by any means. And the faith powerfully crosses these border<sup>456</sup>. This is for he says: “If you cross through fire, it won't burn you, and the rivers won't cross over you” (Isa. 43: 2). And these

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everything that doesn't match the nature's laws, it fears any work within man that apparently is non-conform to the law.

<sup>453</sup> That man who doesn't believe he will feel on himself as narrowed by the nature's laws and by his passions, as one who is master upon himself, he will use freely the nature's laws and he will master his passions, by being himself master upon himself. He proves by that that he is endowed with Ghost. This is for the Ghost is freedom. And through freedom the man communicates with the godlike Ghost Who is the source of all freedom. The man communicated with God in full freedom, as a son to his father.

<sup>454</sup> By faith the man becomes the new man and he makes new also on others, by being himself filled up and by filling others as well with the godlike grace and by being him transformed and by transforming on others in the likeness of God. Thus, the man exceeds the nature's laws.

<sup>455</sup> The meaning could be this: the man can do something out of nothing as God does, but by the fact that the man uses the power of God. The man sows within himself and within nature new qualities, which haven't existed before, but he does that by the God's power coming within him. Thus, the body is given the power not to be burnt by fire, or the fire is takes away its power of causing burns. The science knows surely certain things regarding the future, but the science refers itself only to the repeating things, so that science's content is narrow. In his hope through faith the man doesn't know what will happen, but he hopes, and by hoping the man succeeds in achieving much bigger things which exceed the natural laws of the repetition.

<sup>456</sup> The faith mobilizes the forces of the spirit which are superior to those of the nature, especially when the spirit is in communication by grace with the powers flowing out of the endless Person of God Who is the spring of all power.

things have been worked by the faith, for many times, before the whole creation. Even if the knowledge had been given the possibility to test them, the knowledge wouldn't have been convinced by them. This is for many entered the fire by faith and they defeated the burning power of the fire and they crossed through the fire unharmed; and they stepped on the shoulders of the sea and they reached the shore. And all of these are above-nature and opposite to the knowledge's modes and they have proven the knowledge as vain in all its modes and laws.

Have you seen what the knowledge guards like the nature's borders? And have you seen what the faith gets above-nature like and the knowledge travels there its road? The knowledge's methods ruled the world for five thousand of years, or for a little less than that, or even more than that, but the man hasn't been able to at all to raise his head from the ground and to feel the power of his Creator, until our faith sprouted out and it liberated us from the darkness of the earthly work and from that slavery from after the vain scattering<sup>457</sup>. And now, again, when we have found the calm sea and the without-shortcomings-treasure, we still want to lean ourselves towards the poor springs. There is no knowledge without shortcomings, regardless how much would be enriched. But the treasures of the faith cannot be comprised by the sky and by the earth. He who leans his heart on the hope of the faith he won't ever be lacking anything; and when he has nothing, he will have everything by faith, as it was written: "Anything you ask into prayer by faith, you will take" (Mt. 21: 22). And again: "The Lord is night, worry of nothing" (Phil. 4: 5).

The knowledge always searches for craftsmanships (methods) for guarding them who have acquired the knowledge. And the faith says: "If the Lord doesn't build up the house and if the Lord doesn't guard the city, vainly will take vigil he who guards the city and vainly will toil he builder" (Ps. 126: 1<sup>458</sup>). He

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<sup>457</sup> The falling into sin from the beginning is reckoned as a scattering from the primordial unity of the people in the love for God and among themselves. This seems to aim to be a replica to the wrong Origenistic doctrine of the scattering from the "pleroma" from before creation.

<sup>458</sup> In the KJB we have: Ps. 127: 1: "EXCEPT the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."; in ROB we have: Ps. 126: 1: "If the Lord doesn't build the house, vainly will toil they who built it; if the Lord doesn't guard the city, vainly will take vigil he who guards it." (E. l. t.'s n.)

who prays with faith he won't even use methods and he won't act according to methods. This is for the knowledge praises everywhere the fear, as the wise man said: "Blessed is him who fears" (Wisdom of Sirach<sup>459</sup> 33: 15). But what the faith does? "He feared, he says, and he started sinking (Mt. 14: 30). And again: "You haven't taken ghost of slavery towards fear, but ghost of adoption" (Rom. 8: 15), and towards the freedom of the faith and of the hope into God<sup>460</sup>. And again: "Do not guard on yourself against them, neither you to run away from their face". The fear is always followed by doubt, and the doubts if followed by research. And the research uses methods and the methods lead to knowledge. And in research and in inquiry are always present the fear and the doubt. This is for never one knows everything, as I showed before<sup>461</sup>. This is because of being the soul met with difficult to bear happenings and hardship and by many delusions full of dangers, which the knowledge and the methods of the wisdom cannot help to, at all. But into the hardships exceeding the whole power and border of the human knowledge, the faith won't ever be defeated by any of them<sup>462</sup>. To what extent the human knowledge can help in the seen wars, or against the unseen natures, or against the embodied

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<sup>459</sup> This Book is not given in the KJB. One can find all 14 books given in the ROB and not given in the KJB in [www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu) bearing the title: *Bible Missing Texts*, translated in the English language.

<sup>460</sup> Unlike the knowledge that is dominated by the fear of not losing something of what it knows, or of what it has acquired by knowledge, the faith won't fear anything if it stays steadfast. The faith doesn't fear that it will lose the thing it knows, even by death. The faith liberates us from the nature's laws which surely lead us to death, and the hope upholds within us the surety that we won't end into this death. Peter started fearing because he remembered the law of the water's nature, that cannot uphold the body at the surface, and so Peter started sinking. But while he believed in Christ, Peter had out of Christ the power to walk on the sea. The faith no longer keeps us into the ghost of the fear and of the slavery to natural elements, but it raises us up to the freedom from them and, so, it raises up into the ghost of the daring as sons of God Who protects us against everything, for the eternal life.

<sup>461</sup> Are describe here all the psychological and real stages leading to knowledge and following to knowledge. The author distinguished in this process more stages than Descartes did. Descartes knew the stathe: "dubito, ergo cogito, cogito, ergo sum" (I doubt, and therefore I think, I think, and therefore I am). There is always present throughout the whole process, including in the knowledge, the doubt and the fear, by the fact that one doesn't know everything and by the fact that one doesn't escape, by knowledge, from death. Saint Isaac introduced an affective, existential element, in the starting point of the knowledge and in the knowledge itself.

<sup>462</sup> For instance, the physician knows that a certain patient can be cured by being administrated a certain treatment, but the physician is not sure about that. While, he who has a strong faith he won't fear anything.

powers and against many others? Have you seen the weakness of the knowledge and the power of the faith? The knowledge impeded all its disciples from getting closer to the realities which are foreign to nature. But you look, in this regard, at the power of the faith and what this power allows its disciples to do.

“Into My name, He says, you will cast out devils, and you will pick up snakes, and you will drink venom, and you won’t be harmed” (Mk. 16: 17). The knowledge commands to all of them who walk on its path according to its rules, to study in everything the end before the beginning and then they to start researching, lets the end of a thing being difficult to be found within the borders of the human power, the whole toil to be vain and the things to be hard to accomplish<sup>463</sup>. But what does the faith say? “Him who believes all the things are possible” (Mt. 9: 23). This is for at God nothing is impossible. Oh, untold richness and hidden torrent hidden into His wonderful veils and treasures, that is overpoured through the power of the faith! How much courage and how much it is loaded with, and how much joy and hope it is full with the travel with it! And how light are its burdens! And how much sweetness its work has!

**Question:** he who has been found worthy of tasting the sweetness of the faith and he has turned again to the knowledge of the soul, what special state has he entered?

**Answer:** he who has forsaken the mastering self-freedom and he has turned back to the ways of the poverty which are full of fear and slavery, he is like one who have found a precious pearl and he has changed that pearl for a copper penny.

The knowledge is not to be defamed, but the faith is superior to knowledge. When we defame, we don’t defame the knowledge, let that not be, but we only want to identify its crooked ways which it goes against nature through so that is kindred to the gangs of the devils. And how many steps has the knowledge in these modes<sup>464</sup>? And which is the characteristic of each of them? And to how many understandings the man wakes

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<sup>463</sup> The knowledge won’t start doing something before finding out if it is within the borders of the human power and of the natural laws to take that thing to an end, in order not to toil vainly. The faith approaches also things which are above-nature.

<sup>464</sup> There are right or crooked modes of the knowledge. Each of those modes has diverse steps. The right knowledge’s steps lead the man towards heavens; the steps of the crooked knowledge lower the man towards increasingly more evilness.

up in each of these modes, when he perseveres in them? And which modes of these the man resists by (when the travels in them), to the faith, and he goes out of nature? And which is its characteristic? And on which stage (when turning at its prime goal) the knowledge comes to its nature and it places this stage of its before the faith, in a good living<sup>465</sup>? And where the difference between a stage and another reached at? And who it passes from these ones to those which are higher than its? And which are the modes of that level, namely of the first one? And where the knowledge united with the faith and it becomes one with the faith and it receives out of faith fire-meanings and it get lit up in the ghost and it ascends from serving the earthly realities to the motherland of its Maker, together with the other modes?

But for now, we owe to know that the faith and its works are superior to knowledge. And that itself the knowledge is consummate in faith and it achieves power to ascend upwards and to feel Him Who is higher than all feeling<sup>466</sup> and to see that light that is non-comprised by mind<sup>467</sup> and by the knowledge of the creatures. So, the knowledge is a stage which one ascends by to the height of the faith. But when one reached close to that one, he no longer needs the knowledge<sup>468</sup>. "This is for now, he

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<sup>465</sup> Here Saint Isaac, after he has shown the limited power of the knowledge, he is specifying that he thought doesn't defame the knowledge, as long as the knowledge remains in its own domain: researching and formulating the nature's laws. He only defames the knowledge when it goes out of the natural knowledge and when it launches in conclusions unconfirmed by what the knowledge objectively knows out of nature. A knowledge of the nature is even necessary to the faith, as preparing stage for faith.

<sup>466</sup> The knowledge with its methods, when it becomes precursory to faith, but it ascends, on its higher levels, together with the faith. Its borders are softened, they are becoming transparent, elastic. Then the knowledge becomes feeling, or direct contact with the realities which are higher than the methodical knowledge, but above any feeling, namely above any contact of our senses with the things, but also higher than the souly feeling, which we live through the pressure of some unseen realities. The transcendence of God is reconciled with the certitude of the existence of a connection of ours with Him. We are having here the most fundamental paradox. On these superior levels the faith is also knowledge, or the knowledge is also faith.

<sup>467</sup> Seeing the light non-comprised with the mind it expresses the same paradox in other words. We are here in full Areopagite doctrine.

<sup>468</sup> When somebody reached the faith by knowledge, he no longer needs the knowledge. He has reached an above-knowledge knowledge. But there the faith has ceased too. Or both of them are surpassed in "sight". Even from here one can see that there are three main stages of the true knowledge: that of the nature that precedes the faith and it leads to faith; that one that which the knowledge increases in together with the faith and which their domains no longer differ in; and that one that is above both to knowledge and to faith. These stages are going to be described in more details, by Saint Isaac, a little further.

says, we know partially. But when what is consummate comes, what it is partially will cease" (1 Cor. 13: 9). So, the faith shows us, like through an eye, the truth of the consummation and through faith we find out non-comprised things, but not by the research and by the power of the knowledge.

But the knowledge is needed by the deeds of the righteousness: the fasting, the giving of alms, the taking of vigil, the holiness, and the other deed which are worked through the body; the love for the neighbor, the humble cogitation of the heart, the forgiveness of the mistakes, the remembrance of the goods, the research of mysteries which are covered up in the Holy Scriptures<sup>469</sup>, occupying the cogitation with the higher things, guarding the borders of the soul's passions and the other virtues, which are committed within the soul. All of these ones need knowledge. This is for the knowledge keeps them and it teaches us their order<sup>470</sup>. But all of these still are only stages, which the soul ascends through to that higher height of the faith, and these stages are called as virtues<sup>471</sup>. But that living out of faith is superior to virtue and working that living doesn't consist of deeds, but it is a consummate resting and

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<sup>469</sup> The mysteries of the creatures are involved into Scripture, so that the supra-natural Revelation doesn't give us a knowledge about God as separated from the knowledge of the creatures, of the world. Only the supra-natural Revelation unveils us the deep meanings of the things. But finding out the deep mysteries of the things involved into Scripture enter the domain of the spiritual knowledge.

<sup>470</sup> Here we can see that the author understands by knowledge not too much the science of the nature, but the science of the monastic life and of the ways of elevating or of falling of the monastic life.

<sup>471</sup> This knowledge precedes the faith. It is a science of the rules of the virtue. Saint Isaac reckons the faith as superior to this knowledge. He thinks that the Hellenes too (especially the ancient Stoic philosophers) has virtues. But the faith comes out of grace. We will encounter this idea at Saint Simeon the New Theologian too. There are virtues of the man, by and large. But the faith is more than these general virtues. Of course, though, that there are also virtues developed and crossed through by faith, or by faith's grace. But the knowledge continues to help the faith in developing them. On this higher plan the virtues are full of the faith of the love, and they are no longer simple manifestation of the justice, or of the correctness. And the full love for the man is but that one out of faith, that one seeing in man an existence destined to eternity, giving this comforting to the man. Saint Isaac himself says in the next sentence that these virtues are superior, by adding within them also a resting into God, and not a simple strained effort of the man. Or that the soul is now on a superior level of the virtues, without leaving the virtues, for the soul rests himself of effort when committing them, for the virtues irradiate out of man, without him making any effort. The fact that this level is superior to virtues not by forsaking the virtues, or by deviating from virtues, but by irradiating the virtues effortlessly, it is told by Saint Isaac when he says that in it will be "all the ways of the spiritual living".



comforting and it is committed within heart and in those of the souls. And in it there are all the wonderful ways of the spiritual living, whose work produces a feeling of the spiritual life and a delectation and a joy into God and all the other which are gives to us in that living of the soul who is found worthy of the grace of the happiness from there and all of those committed into faith still from here, according to the teaching from the godlike Scriptures, by God Who is rich in all His gifts.

### **Bewilderment**

And if somebody says: If all these goods and the above mentioned deeds of the virtue and the getting far from evil and the discerning of the subtle thoughts occurring within soul and the fight against thoughts and the war against the enticing passions and the others, which even the faith itself cannot shows its power without, in the soul's work, if all of these are committed by the faith, how do you reckon that the knowledge is opposite to faith?

### **Solution to Bewilderment**

We say that there are three modes thought with the mind (intelligible) which the knowledge ascends and descends in; and, in the same time with changing the modes which it crosses through, the knowledge gets changed becoming harmful or helpful. These three modes are: of the body, of the soul, and of the ghost<sup>472</sup>. The knowledge is one by its nature, but according to these levels of the thoughts (intelligible) and sensitive realities, the knowledge gets thinned and it changes its modes and the work of its understanding. Listen, therefore, also to which are its order (levels) and its principles which the knowledge harms or helps for: the knowledge is a gift given by God to the nature of the rational beings, and the knowledge was given them in the beginning of their creation, and it is simple

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<sup>472</sup> From here one can see that the three modes of knowledge are also three plans of the knowledge, which three levels and methods correspond to. In all of them, the knowledge can be done according to a good or to a bad rule. This is for the knowledge of these plans has a normative character as well, either leading towards ever better, or towards ever eviler.

and it is not divisible in its nature like the sunlight isn't too; only, according to its work, it receives changes and divisions.

### **Word LXIII**

#### **About the First Step of the Knowledge**

When the knowledge follows the bodily lusts, it will gather these modes: richness, vain-glory, adornment, resting of the body, diligent searching for the rational wisdom that is appropriate to ruling the present world and out of which gush up the novelty of the contrivances, of the craftsmanships, and of the teachings and those things which adorn the body in this seen world. Out of these ways it is born that knowledge that is opposite to faith, which I said about that is called as vain-knowledge, because it is empty of any care for God, and because it brings a rational helplessness into cogitation, and it places the cogitation under the mastery of the body. This knowledge is totally concerned with this world.

The characteristic of the true knowledge is, on the opposite, that of being a totally understanding power and a hidden guide to the man and it is a godlike care visiting the man and taking care of the man<sup>473</sup>. But that knowledge that is tied to the bodily lusts doesn't attribute the guidance to God, but it reckons that any good is within man and within man it is the salvation from the harmful things and that guarding against hardships and against the many obstacles accompanying our nature secretly and manifestly, it belongs to our natural zeal and in our craftsmanships. This bragging knowledge reckons that all the things depend on its taking-of-care, according to them who say that there isn't a (godlike) oikonomia of the seen things.

But this knowledge cannot get rid of the ceaseless worry and of the fear for the body. That's why such a man is dominated by his lack of courage, by sadness and by despair, by the fear of devils, by the cowardice towards people, by the fear maintained by the rumors about thieves, by the news about

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<sup>473</sup> The true knowledge is both out of man's power and out of God's power.

the death of some people or of others, by the worry about sickness, by the fear of poverty, by the fear of lacking the necessary things, by the fear of death, by the fear of sufferance and by the fear of wild beasts and of similar things, by the things happening on the stormy sea, day and night, which can rush in upon him. This is because one like this doesn't know how to throw his worry upon God, with the strength of the faith in God. That's why this knowledge swirls into plots and cunningness in all its things. And when the ways of its contrivances are proved to be vain, because of some reason and it doesn't search for the taking-of-care from God, it fights the people who impede it and who resist it.

In this knowledge is planted the tree of the knowledge of the good and of the bad, that uproots the love. This knowledge spies for the small mistakes of other people and for the causes and for their weaknesses and it makes the man to decide and to resist by words and to plot through evil cunningness and to rebuke his fellow humans also in other ways. Out of this knowledge comes the haughtiness and the pride; this of because this knowledge attribute to itself all goof things, and not to God<sup>474</sup>.

On the contrary, the faith attributes its deeds to the grace. That's why the faith doesn't know the haughtiness, as it is written: "I can do all things into Christ Who strengthens me" (Phil. 4: 13). And again: "but not I, but the grace of God that is with me" (1 Cor. 4: 15). And what the blessed Apostle said: "The knowledge makes haughty", he said that about that knowledge that is not united with the faith and with the hope into God and not about the true knowledge<sup>475</sup>.

The knowledge of the truth for humbleness it makes consummate the souls of them who have that knowledge. So it did to Moses, to David, to Isaiah, to Peter, to Paul, and to the other saints who have been found worthy, in a consummate manner, of this knowledge, according to the measure of the human nature. This is for their always changing contemplations (the understandings) and the godlike unveilings and the high seeing of the spiritual realities and of the untold mysteries, they

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<sup>474</sup> The tasting and the nourishing in continuation out of the tree of the knowledge of the good and of the bad, it will uproot the love, because of the haughtiness that is born by it, within them who taste out of it, and because of using that knowledge, by and large, by them who taste it, for their egotistic benefit.

<sup>475</sup> It again appears the true knowledge united with the faith.

totally overwhelm their knowledge and their body is, in their eyes, as ashes and dust.

And the other knowledge gest haughty, because of walking into darkness, and it wants to prove its things by comparing them to those from on earth, because of not knowing that there is something superior to itself. And all of them are kidnapped by pride, because of being from on earth, and they match their living to what their body desires and they lean on their own deeds and they do not cogitate in their mind at the non-comprised realities. And they suffer these things all the time while they are carried away by these waves.

And the saints work that glorious virtue of God and their work is up high and their thought doesn't occupy on itself with the care for contrivance and for the vain things. This is for they who walk into light they couldn't get lost. That's why, all of them who have got strayed from the light of the knowledge of the Son of God and who have deviated from truth, they walk these paths. This is the first level of the knowledge. On it, the man obeys his lust. We defame this one and we reckon it not only opposite to faith but also to any good work.

## **Word LXIV**

### **About the Second Level of the Knowledge**

But when one leaves the first level and he turns towards the cogitation and the desires of his soul, he works the goods described before both with the cogitation of his soul and with the senses of his body, through the light of his nature. And these goods are: the fasting, the prayer, the giving of alms, the reading of the godlike Scriptures, the diverse good deeds, the fight against passions, and other similar goods. All the good works and especially the diverse goods which can be seen within soul and the wonderful deeds serving in the courtyard of Christ, on this second level of the knowledge, are accomplished

by the Holy Ghost through the work of His power<sup>476</sup>. The Holy Ghost straightens the path of the heart which lead us to faith, which we gather through victuals for the future age. But on this level the knowledge still is bodily and composed. But this knowledge is the way guiding us and leading us to faith. This is for there is a higher level than this one. And if somebody advances, he will see on himself as ascending through it, with the help from Christ. This happens when the man lays down the foundation of its work into the appeasement resulting out of getting less involved with the people, in reading the Scriptures, in prayer, and in the other goods, which the things of the second knowledge are committed in. And in this knowledge worked all the good things. This is because this knowledge commits its work in the things submitted to the senses, through the bodily senses, in the exterior plan<sup>477</sup>.

### **Word LXV**

#### **About the Third Stage of the Knowledge, that is the Stage of the Consummation**

Listen to how one thinks on himself and how he achieves the spiritual state and who he becomes in his living like the unseen powers who liturgize not by the felt work of the deeds, but through that work committed with the taking heed of the cogitation. When the knowledge gets elevated from the earthly realities and out of the worry for those and it starts experiencing the understanding of the internal realities, which are hidden from the eyes, and it starts despising the things in a certain way - out of which are born the passions which crook the soul - and it stretches upwards; when it follows the faith in the worry for the future age and in the desire for the things promised to us, and in researching the hidden mysteries, then

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<sup>476</sup> Saint Isaac the Syrian reckons that the Holy Ghost is working within man exclusively on the level of the man's union with God. But the Ghost helps the man also on the level of the doing by strengthening the man and without stopping the man's efforts.

<sup>477</sup> Out of the last two *Words* and out of the following ones, one can see even clearer that the stages of the knowledge have, at Saint Isaac, rather a moral and normative meaning. But also, that these ones represent the true knowledge of the reality.

the faith swallows the knowledge and it turns back and it gives birth to knowledge since the beginning, in order that knowledge to become as that one from the beginning and to become totally a ghost<sup>478</sup>.

Then, that man can fly, borne on wings, in the plans of the unsees realities, and he can reach the deep of the untouched sea<sup>479</sup>, penetrating the godlike and wonderful rulings, those ones from within the nature of the realities thought with the mind (intelligible) and those out of the natures of the realities submitted to the senses (sensitive), and he researches the spiritual mysteries which can be caught by a simple and subtle understanding<sup>480</sup>. Then the inward senses are wakened up by a work of the Ghost, according to an order characteristic to the immortality and incorruptibility state<sup>481</sup>. This is for they have received even from here the thought resurrection (not yet the sensitive resurrection), as a mystery, towards the true confession of the greatness of all realities<sup>482</sup>.

These ones are the three modes of the knowledge, which the whole road of the man crosses through: into body, into soul, and into ghost. Through them the man starts discerning between good and bad: the knowledge of the man's soul crosses

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<sup>478</sup> When the knowledge has been elevated to the unseen realities, it has become faith, for those unseen realities are no longer known through senses. Properly-said, that faith gives birth to the true knowledge, that knowledge from the beginning of our being, when it was living into the horizon of the spiritual realities. Then the man has become totally a ghost, being filled up by the Holy Ghost. This is for it entered the plan of the Ghost where there is a freedom from laws, where the breeze of the endless love blows, where are chosen freely and one at the time the endless manifestations of the love and of the communion.

<sup>479</sup> Then he reached the depths of that sea that is untouched by senses and by mind, namely the depths of the godlike life, of the Ghost. We can see here the same joining of transcendence of God and of experiencing on God, through His grace.

<sup>480</sup> Here are perceived, in the same time, in an above-understanding-mode, the godlike rulings working within the seen and unseen beings, but also the godlike mysteries which are above these rulings, through a simple and subtle intuition, of spiritual order.

<sup>481</sup> The inward senses are penetrated in their work by the work of the Ghost, or they become also organs of the work of the Ghost, taking place a theandric work, one divine-human. That is a state that anticipatedly tastes the immortality and the incorruptibility. It is lived the eternity on each moment, without knowing about moment anymore, by forgetting about the moment.

<sup>482</sup> He who has reached there he lives inwardly, in the mystery, this resurrection, and that is a proof about the renewal of all realities that will take place through that power overpoured out of that state of inward resurrection. The inside is not meant to always remain without influence upon the external realities, but when Christ wants the inside will be overpoured over all the external realities, for the Resurrected Christ Himself is within the resurrected soul.

through these three measures, until he gets out of this world. A sole knowledge works in all these three measures the fullness of all injustice and lawlessness, as also into that of the righteousness, and the reaching of all the mysteries of the Ghost into the three measures<sup>483</sup>. And in it there is the whole movement of the mind, either ascending to the goods or descending to the evil, or in the middle. These measures are called by the Holy Fathers as “according to nature”, “contrary to nature” and “above nature”. And these are the three plans which ascends and descend in, as I said, the memory of the rational soul<sup>484</sup>. This is for when somebody works the righteousness into nature, or above nature, he is kidnapped by the memory of it, to seeing God withing nature, or he gets out to herd the pigs as one who has lost the richness of his power and who worked with the multitude of the devils.

### **The Recapitulation of the Three Knowledges**

The first stage of the knowledge makes the soul indifferent to the running on the traces of God. The second one warms the soul up through the hurried running on the way of

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<sup>483</sup> The knowledge, in this sense, it unveils and it also transforms the soul. The knowledge unveils the good possibilities of the man and it fulfills them. It unveils the godlike mysteries and the powers from above-nature and it imprints those within man, in order the man to be able to commit deeds which are above his natural power, but which he aspired to on the line of the good. The three states of the knowledge are, therefore, also three plans of the given and possible reality, three modes of unveiling those, of committing those, and of assimilating them to our being. The knowledge is not a theoretical occupation, but through it the man is accomplished, in a way or another, not only up to the limit of his nature, but also beyond it, endlessly.

<sup>484</sup> “Plans” or “sides” or “regions”. Once they are known and impropriated, they can be again left. But, by memory, the soul remains tied to them. Often, we remember the know and left realities, so that we can turn back to them, or that we can think at them for an instant. Through knowledge we understand not only the realities of the nature, strengthening us among them, but also the realities contrary to nature and the realities from above-nature, us impropriating those to ourselves. Our nature has the possibility to connect itself to the plan of the contrary-to-nature realities, and also to the plan of the above-nature realities, and it can fall into the first ones and it can be elevated into the last ones. Our nature is not locked up, strictly, like that one of the animals. But the contrary-to-nature realities get imprinted within nature, and they alter it, while the above-nature-realities when imprinted within our nature they enlarge our nature’s powers. The nature moves on all three plans of the reality, which are not only given but they are also possible, so that the man could become satanic while still keeping the countenance of a man, or the man can become godlike, again while preserving a countenance of a man.

the realities belonging to faith. And the third one is that of the resting; and it is the image of the future rejoicing only by the wisdom of the thinking at the future mysteries. But because the nature hasn't got yet totally elevated from the mortal stage and out of the burden of the body, and it hasn't been consummated into the spiritual one that is higher than that that still can deviate, it doesn't have either the power of the consummation, that one that no longer needs to serve and to be in the world of the death; because of not having the power to fully leave the body's nature. And as long as still is in this life, it remains in course of transformation, both in this one and in that one<sup>485</sup>. And by being poor and hungry, the soul serves on the second level – that one in the middle –, through that virtue placed in the nature in order to be worked through the body's nature<sup>486</sup>.

And on occasions (for a while), like them who have taken ghost of resurrection into the mystery of the freedom, he rejoices of the grace of the Ghost, by ascending on the level of his Giver, and then he turns again back to the humbleness of his deeds. And these ones are those through the body. And the soul keeps these ones, let the enemy will kidnap the soul through the delusions existing in this evil age and through the troubled and deviated from the right-path cogitations. This is because, as long as the man is down, locked up under the cover of the body, the man cannot have surety. This is for there is no consummate freedom in this non-consummate age<sup>487</sup>. That's

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<sup>485</sup> Until the spiritual man still is in this world, he still is on course of transformation, both in his bodily nature, mortal, and in his spiritual level he is living on.

<sup>486</sup> BY and large, the man by remaining as long as he lives on earth into body and mortal, he cannot persevere into the third stage, i.e. that one of the seeing of the godlike mysteries, and he cannot reach it without the tiredness of those deeds aiming to consummation. He is submitted to change. It is a change that elevated the man for an instance from his bodily condition, but it also lower the man from the state that is outside the human condition, into the condition of the life into body, namely that of the nature. That's why, for the most part of the time the man must actualize the virtues whose potentiality is placed in his nature. By that "the poor and hungry soul is enriched with consummation". The man must serve (liturgize) God in order to achieve his consummation. This is in order the man not to fall below nature and in order the man to ascend, from time to time, at that state that is above-nature. For the most part of the time the man is in the middle state, if he makes the effort to maintain himself in it. But neither this state is totally deprived of grace. The man falls out of grace only when he falls into that state that is beneath-nature. For the most part of the time the man is in the middle stage of working the virtues into body, namely neither in that lower state of the life into sin, nor in that or the full resting into God.

<sup>487</sup> A special accent on our full freedom in the future life was placed by Saint Gregory of Nyssa (see: J. Gaïth, *La conception de la liberté chez Saint Grégoire the Nysse*, Paris, Vrien,



why, the whole work of the knowledge is a work of getting accustomed (of tiring exercising, of growing up). And the work of the faith isn't committed through deeds, but it is accomplished in spiritual understandings and it is above-senses. This is for the faith is subtler than the knowledge is<sup>488</sup>, because the knowledge is of the things submitted to the senses. This is for all the saints who are found worthy of this living (that is the kidnapping to God), they live through the power of their faith the joy of that above-nature living.

And we call as faith not that one which one believed through in the difference among the godlike and all-worshipper hypostases and above-everything and characteristic to the godhead, and into the wonderful embodiment of the Word into the humanity taken out of our nature, despite this faith is a very high one, but we refer to that faith that sprouts out within soul out of the light of the grace and it supports the heart through the witness of the understanding, in order the heart to be doubtless in the surety of the hope, stranger to any imagination<sup>489</sup>; that faith that is not shown in accepting the things heard by ears, but it is shown in looking with the spiritual eyes at the mysteries hidden within soul and at the godlike richness hidden to the eyes of the sons of the body and unveiled into the Ghost to them who feast at the table of Christ by cogitating at His laws. This is for Himself said: "If you keep My commandments, I will send you the Comforter, the Ghost of the truth, Whom the world cannot receive, and That One will teach you the whole truth" (Jn. 14: 15-16). This shows to the man the holy power dwelling all the time within him, the cover, that strength thought with the mind (intelligible), which always

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1953). That freedom will be a liberation from all limitations. It will be a liberation from all impediments pose by body against the soul's enthusiasm. This is for the body will become thinned, spiritualized, transparent, and unsubmitted to passions. Secondly, it will be a liberation from past, or from the past's passionate addictions; but there will be also a cessation of the between present and the hoped future. We will possess then everything we hope for. So, it will be a liberation from body, from space, and from time. It will finally be a possibility of loving consummately on the measure of the consummate knowledge.

<sup>488</sup> This is for its world is subtler too. It is the spiritual world, that is thin not only by its essence, but also through its delicateness.

<sup>489</sup> Saint Isaac speaks not about the faith and teaching, or as content of some phrases, but he speaks about the faith as act, as conviction, on the ground of an understanding, of an intuition, of a mysterious and direct contact with God in Trinity and with Christ, through the work of the Holy Ghost – or of the grace – within soul. Of course, the act of faith, when it is right, it can perceive but the right content of the faith, or God as love, as Trinity, as embodied Word.

cover the man and that banish away from him any harm, so that no harm gets near to the man's soul and body<sup>490</sup>. This strength is felt in an unseen manner by the luminous and understanding mind, with the eyes of its faith<sup>491</sup>. This (the power of the Ghost) it is known by the saints more than by others by trying (experiencing) it.

And this power is the Ghost Himself Who make hot, by the strength of the faith, the soul's parts, as by a fire. And it spreads rapidly and it despises any danger and by the hops in God it is elevated on the wings of the faith, out of the seen creation, and it is shown aa drunk in its kidnapping by the care for the things of God and by the simple sight and by the unseen understanding of the godlike nature, and it accustoms the cogitation to occupy on itself with the taking heed at its hidden things. This is because until that state doesn't come, namely the consummation of the mysteries, and until we aren't found worthy of being those mysteries unveiled to us in a shown manner. The faith liturgizes between God and saints, untold mysteries<sup>492</sup>.

May it be that by the help of the grace, through these ones us too to be found worthy of Christ Himself, here by downpayment, and there, in the Kingdom of Heavens, into hypostasis and into truth, together with them who love Him! Amen.

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<sup>490</sup> This is an explanation of the faith worthy of being memorized. The Ghost only shows the power of faith existing all the time within man's mind, naturally, namely to set that power in work. The Ghost makes the mind feel that power as out of itself. And this understanding feeling waken up through the Ghost it is the faith. The faith comes out of the collaboration of the Holy Ghost with the man. That's why, he who doesn't believe he cannot invoke the excuse that the Ghost hasn't given him the gift of the faith. He doesn't believe because of not freely collaborating with the Ghost to actualize the faith from within him. On the other hand, the Ghost is over the man like a dome, like a strength, or like a firm sky, which the evil ghosts cannot cross through with their temptations. The Holy Ghost is our defender.

<sup>491</sup> The faith "feels", namely it makes a contact with the reality of the Ghost that is present within man. The faith is the crossing through of the man by the Ghost and the feeling of this crossing through.

<sup>492</sup> The faith is a working bridge between saints - or among them who strive for holiness - and God; the faith fulfills also a serving on this plan, a serving of the mysteries, or through faith are unveiled the mysteries of the life between saints and God.

## Word LXVI

### About other Ways and Meanings of the Knowledge of Diverse Kinds

That knowledge that moves within the seen realities, or within senses, and it follows their sequencing, it is called as natural. And that knowledge moving on the plan of the thought (intelligible) realities and by their mediation into the bodiless natures, it is called as spiritual, because of receiving its feeling into ghost and not into senses<sup>493</sup>. And these two occur within soul from outside, in order to be known<sup>494</sup>. And that one that is produced on the godlike plan, it is called as above-nature and it is rather known also as above-knowledge<sup>495</sup>. The sight (the contemplation) of this knowledge-above-knowledge is not received by the soul out of a content that is external to the soul, as in the case of the first two kinds of knowledge, but it is shown and it is unveiled out of the realities form within the soul in an immaterial manner, suddenly, and unexpectedly<sup>496</sup>. This is for “The Kingdom of Heavens is within you: (Lk. 17: 21). The Kingdom of Heavens is not hoped for on the ground of some imaginings, neither it comes through judgments formulated on the ground of the work of Christ and by keeping His word, but it

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<sup>493</sup> It seems to be about the receiving of a feeling of the mind from the Ghost. It seems that Saint Isaac knows a power of the feeling that can be set in work either by senses or by mind. In the last case, this mutation of the feeling is done by the Ghost. This can mean also a transfiguration of that feeling through senses. About a perceptive energy of the senses that cannot be reduced to the senses' materialness, it is mentioned and analyzed also by a certain direction of the psychology from our country.

<sup>494</sup> This phrase is quite meandrous. It seems to be about the birth of these two knowledges within soul from outside the soul, by the touch of the soul to the seen and to the unseen realities, through two kinds of feelings for their knowledge. Properly-said also the knowledge of the intelligible realities is received by the soul also through the mediation of the seen realities, and therefore - in this sense - from outside.

<sup>495</sup> The knowledge of the godlike realities, that takes place on the above-nature plan, it can be rather reckoned as an above-knowledge work. Saint Gregory Palamas will describe in details this above-knowledge knowledge. Saint Isaac shows here too three stages of the knowledge: natural, spiritual, and knowledge-above-knowledge.

<sup>496</sup> This kind of knowledge has the character of a lightening intuition, one that doesn't use the senses and the rational judgments. The spiritual knowledge is that one that sees the spiritual powers and it sees God too, through the rationalities placed by God within things. God can be seen through the thing's transparency to Him.

is unveiled from within the way of the hidden cogitation, without a certain cause, and without a researching of it<sup>497</sup>.

### **Interpretation to the Things Said Above**

The first knowledge is born out of continuous researching and out of zealous learning; the second one, out of the good living and out of the pious cogitation; and the third one has been appointed only to faith. This is because in it the knowledge ceases and the deeds come to an end and the use of the senses becomes superfluous. So, the more the knowledge descends within these borders, the more it will be honored<sup>498</sup>. And the more it descends the more it will be honored. And when it reaches the ground and the earthly realities, the knowledge masters over all realities and outside the knowledge anything is overlooked and useless. And when the soul raises its sight upwards and when the soul unfolds his meanings in the heavenly realities and when the soul desires the realities which cannot be seen with the eyes and which are not in the power of the body, then all of those are upheld by faith<sup>499</sup>.

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<sup>497</sup> The expression εσωθεν της ειχόνης την διανοίαν can be translated both as: “from within the hidden way of the cogitation” and as: from within the image hidden into cogitation”. The cogitation is an image that hides on God, or God is an image hidden into cogitation. This image (role model) sometimes penetrates the cogitation by becoming visible. This kind of knowledge doesn’t base on itself on using the images (the things) as the natural kind of knowledge does, neither it bases on itself on the judgments founded on the words of Christ, words which are passed into the deeds of the virtues, but it is based on the direct seeing of the mysteries.

<sup>498</sup> The godlike reality becomes seen unexpectedly, without rational deductions from cause to effect.

<sup>499</sup> Nicephorus Theotokis interprets this word like this: “There are three kinds of knowledge: that one coming from study and learning; that one coming from hearing with faith; and that one coming from revelation and from being imparted with the grace of the All-Holy Ghost. The last one is the superior one and it is more consummate than the other two and it is bestowed only them who have reached the peak of the virtue”. By calling this one too as faith, and therefore by saying that this is not shown through deeds, but by spiritual meanings and into the simple work of the soul, above senses, he adds here also the word “the more it descends the more it will be honored”. And him who has been found worthy of such a knowledge, if he descends from the high and above-senses seeing (from the high and above-senses contemplation), down to the earthly realities, it will enjoy the greatest honor. This is for this one by having within themselves the hot faith as a grain of mustard and by being full of entrustment, he doesn’t only know in details the realities from the creation but, because he can master over all realities, he commands what he wants. “For if you have faith like a grain of mustard, you will tell this mountain: move yourself from here there, and it will move, and

## Word LXVII

### **About that Soul than Tends towards the Deep Sight, in Order to Sink Himself in that Deep Sight out of the Bodily Thoughts and out of the Memory of the Things**

Any one thing that is higher than another it is hidden to that thing which it is higher in comparison to. And this doesn't mean that that thing has by nature another body as a curtain, in order to be able to unveil its hidden. This doesn't mean that one can reach the Prime Light in the most limpid mode, in an unmediated manner, or on another level, one that though isn't separated form that according to the place<sup>500</sup>, but according to the cleanness which he can received it with, and according to the height of that cleanness, namely according to the measure of the minds, or according to the power for receiving the views and the higher powers.

All the understanding beings are hidden to them who are lower, but not through a nature that would differentiate them, but by the movements of the virtues. But I am not saying this about the Holy Powers, about the beings endowed with soul, and about demons. The first ones are hidden from them who are in the middle, and the ones from the middle are hidden from those from the third plan, both by nature and by place, as also through movements. And we believe that each one of these is hidden to another in its inside through knowledge, either they can see on one another or not, but from those which are lower by nature<sup>501</sup>. For the bodiless reality cannot be seen through a sight focused on them from outside them, unlike the bodily realities which can be seen by a sight external to them, but by

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nothing will be impossible to you" (Mt. 11: 20). But it could be that Nicephorus Theotokis not to agree what it is said in this text further on, where it is analyzed more, seemingly, the honor this kind of knowledge it receives from people. He could agree also the explanation that the more the knowledge occupies on itself with the lowest things, the more honored will be, by being able to know those things more exactly.

<sup>500</sup> Here it is being alluded the teaching of Dionysus the Areopagite, according to which the first angelic level contemplates in an unmediated manner the Prime Light, or God, while the other angelic groups do that through the mediation of the intermediary levels. But Saint Isaac adds that that doesn't mean a separation of the other levels from God.

<sup>501</sup> The cherubs are hidden from Seraphs through knowledge; a man who is on a higher spiritual level, likewise, he is hidden - in many concerns - to them who are on a lower spiritual level. But the Holy Powers are hidden from people also through nature.

the fact that the bodiless realities can see on one another we say that one of them are inside the movements while others are through the virtues and of the measure of the movements<sup>502</sup>. That's why, either they are equally honored or they are differently honored, they see on one another not through imagination, but through a non-liar and true-by-nature sight, except on the cause of all of them that is above their diversity and that is the only one all-worshipped.

The demons, though they are very filthy, they are not hidden from one another on their levels. But they cannot see the two orders which are above them<sup>503</sup>. This is for the spiritual sight is the light of the movement. And this one itself is them mirror and eye<sup>504</sup>. But when their movements get darkened, they no longer see the levels from above themselves<sup>505</sup>. But the devils see on one another within their order because of being thicker than the angelic groups<sup>506</sup>. These are the things I have wanted to tell you about the devils.

But the soul, to the extent they are defiled and darkened, they cannot see either on one another or on themselves. But when the soul gets cleaned and they come again back to their state from the beginning, they will see clearly the three orders: that one from beneath themselves, that one from above themselves, and on one another. So, not because of changing their bodily quality, they can see the angels, the devils, an on one another, but they will see through itself their spiritual

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<sup>502</sup> The seraphs see the Cherubs or they are seen by Cherubs within them, for the movements of their virtues are the more intense movements of the movement of those ones.

<sup>503</sup> The devils cannot see the inside of the angelic groups, neither they can see the people's inside.

<sup>504</sup> It is interesting this definition given to sight, to conscience, and to knowledge: it is the light of the movement. There are blind movements which cannot see anything. The knowledge is a movement, but it is a luminous movement. There takes place a union between movement and light. Or, the highest movement is the luminous movement. The light is movement too. And the (spiritual) light in movement it is knowledge. And knowledge of the self, or the knowledge, it is a movement of the light, or it is the light of the movement turned towards itself. It is an eye seeing on itself and it is a transparent mirror of him who sees on himself in that mirror.

<sup>505</sup> In the Greek text is said: "those from beneath them". But is seemed to us as being a mistake.

<sup>506</sup> Being thicker, they can see on one another. The thickness is more easily seen by an inferior sight. The thickness of the demons is, of course, of spiritual order. A being that is full of hatred, of agitation, it will be felt, it will be seen more easily, because of disturbing the other more. They who are thick in this sense they will see the thick ones but they cannot see the thin ones. But the thin ones see the thick (rude) ones.

nature and order. And if you told me that it is impossible one to see the demon, or the angel, if they to not change on themselves and take a visible to man countenance, namely that not the soul sees but only the body does it, I answer you that, if it was so, why would the soul need cleaning?

Actually, the devils show themselves to the unclean people too, and even the angels do that, but when the people see them with the bodily eyes, they see them without needing any cleanness. But that soul that has been cleaned doesn't see like that, but spiritually, with the eye of the nature, namely with the intuiting and understanding eye. And if the souls see on one another, even while the souls still are within body, you won't wonder yourself about that. This is for I am bringing you the testimony of somebody who confesses the truth, namely of Blessed Athanasius the Great, who said in his writing about Anthony the Great that, while the Great Anthony was sitting at prayer, he saw somebody's soul ascending with much honor and he blessed him who had been worthy of being shared with such a glory. That one was the Blessed Amon from Nitria. And the mountain which Saint Anthony was living at it was thirteen days far from Nitria.

It was shown through that example, relatedly to the three mentioned orders, the fact that the spiritual natures, even though they are far from one another, they still can see on each other. Likewise, the souls, when they are clean, they do not see bodily but spiritually. This is because the bodily sight is visible and it sees the present realities. But the realities from far need a different kind of sight in order to be seen.

The groups from above are many and countless according to their existence and they are called according to the kinds and levels. For, why would otherwise be called as Principalities, Dominions, and Powers? And the Masteries might have been called like that for they are honored, and they are fewer than those form beneath them, as said Saint Dionysus the Bishop of Athens<sup>507</sup>. Everything is through mastery, through knowledge, very great and totally differing from one another according to the level of their states. And for they are chaining from level to

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<sup>507</sup> Theotokis says that the Masteries are known less than the ranks which are beneath to them (Principalities, Dominions, and Powers), for they master these ones. He also says that Saint Isaac is among the first to mention the writings of Dionysus the Areopagite, which he firstly mentioned at a Synod from the year 532, when Saint Isaac was still living.

level until reaching the unity of the Greatest and Strongest than all of them, and Who is the Head and the Ground of the entire creation. And I am calling head not the Builder, but on the first and most wonderful creatures of God<sup>508</sup>. This is for many are below the Providence and below the Wisdom of God Who is theirs and our Maker. And the more their subjects are the lower are themselves. And they are inferior in height and in smallness, and not in space, but in power and in knowledge, according to the measure they have received, the smaller knowledge following after the bigger knowledge.

The godlike Scripture has mentions us all these understanding beings by two spiritual names and as divided on three levels. The first one is divided in the great and high and all-holy Chairs, in the Cherubs with many eyes, and in the Seraph with six wings. The second level in Dominions, Powers, and Masteries. The third level in Principalities, Archangels and Angels. These levels men in Hebrew the followings: the Seraphs are the hot, burning ones; the Cherubs are them having much knowledge and wisdom; the Chairs are them who receive and who rest God within themselves. These groups were called like that also according to their works. The Chairs mean the honored ones; the Dominions are them who master upon any kingdom; the Principalities are them who rule the sky; the Masteries are them who master upon nations and upon each man; the Powers are them who are strong in power and fearsome at countenance; the Seraphs are them who sanctify; the Cherubs are them who carry; the Archangels are the full of vigil guardians; the Angels are the envoy ones.

On the first day were created the seven natures understanding in silence and with voice<sup>509</sup>, that what is the

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<sup>508</sup> "The Head and the Foundation and the first among the wonders of the deeds of God" he calls on Jesus Christ. For He is the Head of all Principality and Dominion (Col. 2: 10) and He is the cornerstone, that chosen one, that honored (1 Pt. 2: 7) and the foundation laid, outside which nobody can lay down another foundation (1 Cor. 3: 11). "Though Him the skies were strengthened" (Ps. 32: 6 (in KJB we have: Ps. 33: 6 (E. l. t.'s n.))), "the ages were made" (Hebr. 1: 2), and were committed "the great and wonderful realities". Christ is called as "deed" of God according to his humanity. Even in this quality Christ is above all angelic groups.

<sup>509</sup> "Maybe the nine ones". They are understanding by silently understanding the greatness of God. Olivier Clément says that even in the silence of the face, therefore also of the soul, there is a profound understanding. About the silence of the face, he says: "It is the silence, it is the full silence, epiphanic, that transforms the entire face in a transcendental presence... The mouth can speak out of the supra-abundance of the silence" (*Le visage interior*, Stöck, Paris,



light<sup>510</sup>. On the second day, the strength. On the third day God gathered the waters and He made the plants to sprout out. On the fourth Day God shared the light. On the fifth day God created the birds, the reptiles, and the fish. On the sixth day God gave to the entire world a settlement, or its length and width. God gave the world, as beginning, the sunrise; as end the sunset; the things from the right as north; the things from the left, as south. God made all the earth like a bedding and the ones from above as a skin, as a dome, as a circle; and the second circle as a wheel attached to the first one; and the ones of the earth attached to the ones of the sky. And the ocean like a girdle surrounding the sky and the earth. And inside it, high mountains reaching the sky. And the sun behind the mountains in order the sun to cross behind the mountains for the whole night. And the great sea inside these mountains, occupying a half and a quarter of the dry land<sup>511</sup>. And the glory be of our God!

### **Word LXVIII**

#### **About the Guarding of the Heart and about a Subtler Sight (Contemplation)**

If you are alone in your cell and you haven't achieved yet power for a true sight (contemplation), you will always occupy on yourself with the cogitation at the troparia and at the kathisma, and with the thought at death and with the hope for the future realities. This is for these ones gather the mind and they don't let the mind to get scattered, until there will come the true sight (contemplation). This is for the power of the ghost is stronger than the passions are. You will also cogitate at the hope for the future realities, united with the remembrance of God, and you will understand well the meaning of the troparia

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1978, pp. 14-15). But the angelic powers also communicate somehow the godlike greatness through their speaking and amazed silence, or through their "silent" voice.

<sup>510</sup> By the fact that their being is understanding, they are light by excellence. Saint Isaac says that it refers to them that "light" which the Genesis says about that God created, on the first day, the "light".

<sup>511</sup> This was the vision upon world at that time.

and you will guard on yourself against the external things which move you towards lusts. And take heed at your small deeds, as also at things. And you will always examine your thoughts and you will pray for earning eyes in all your behavior<sup>512</sup>. From here it starts springing out the joy. And then you will find the troubles sweeter than the honey.

Nobody can defeat his passions except by the felt and seen virtues. And the scattering of the mind cannot be defeated by anybody except by using the spiritual reading. Our mind is light and it not tied to a certain thought it won't stop from scattering. And without the consummation of the virtues mentioned before, one cannot achieve this guarding. This is because if somebody doesn't defeat these enemies he won't be let alone. And if the peace doesn't reign within him, how will be him able to find out the realities placed within the peace? This is for the passions are a wall in front of the hidden virtues of the soul. And if the passions do not fall by the showing of the virtues, the ones from within won't be seen. Neither can somebody, while being outside the wall, to live into the ones from within the wall. And nobody will see the Sun into darkness, neither the virtue of the soul's nature, as long as the disturbance of the passions still persists within him<sup>513</sup>.

You pray God Him to give you to feel the longing for Him and the desire for Him. This is for, when this feeling and the desire for the Ghost have come to you, you will be able to part with the world; and the world will part with you. But one cannot feel This One without appeasement and asceticism and without the speaking regarding the reading about these things. And without these ones one cannot find those ones. This is because, if you search for them, they will leave after a little while and there will occur the bodily ones. Let him who understand, to understand. The Lord deigned the wise man to eat this bread in sweats. The

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<sup>512</sup> All your behavior to be a sight to you, or guided by a sight, by an understanding. You be like a Cherub who is entirely eyes.

<sup>513</sup> The guarding isn't a simple technique, but it is gained at the end of the virtues committed through the body. Each virtue represents a victory of our will in a side or another of our being, and it will bring peace from a certain passion. On the superior plan stays the non-scattering of the mind's thoughts. This is the work of the mind's guarding. But only inside this peace one can see the godlike realities hidden within mind, or unveiled to the mind. Until then, the passions stay as a wall in the way of our sight that is directed towards inside. This wall must be torn down through virtues. By that one gains both the peace and the transparency to the godlike realities. The treasures from inside, as seen through the soul, are also called as soul's virtues, unlike the virtues which are accomplished through the body.

Lord didn't do that out of evilness, but in order they not to remain unconsumed within us and we to die. This is for each virtue is the mother of the next virtue. So, if you leave the mother that gave birth to the virtues, and you start going to search for its daughters before you have achieved the mother of the virtues, those virtues will become vipers within your soul. And if you do not cast them away from you, you will surely die<sup>514</sup>.

## Word LXIX

### About the Diverse Teachings and about the Benefit out of Each One

The spiritual feeling is that one having the feature of receiving the seeing (contemplative) power<sup>515</sup>, like the apples of the eye does, which have within them the power of receiving the light submitted to the senses. The mental sight (contemplation) is a natural knowledge united with the state of the nature, that it is called as natural light. It is the holy power of the gift of the discernment placed between light and sight (contemplation)<sup>516</sup>. The knower natures are some existences endowed with the discernment coming to them out of light, on the purpose of the seeing (contemplation). The passions are some sort of callous being<sup>517</sup>.

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<sup>514</sup> Through pride the virtues become vipers biting on others, but they also poison him who have them. The image of the viper is used also in *The Ladder (Word IX)*.

<sup>515</sup> “Ἡ ποιωθεῖσα”, namely that one that has been prepared through learning. This is for he says that the sight of the mind (νοητὴ θεωρία) is natural, it is obvious that through spiritual feeling he means the feeling of the mind. he who has prepared on himself through learning, he then will receive the seeing (contemplative) power. It is a sense entering the direct contact with the godlike realities, as one enters through his bodily sight the contact with the seen realities.

<sup>516</sup> “The gift (charisma) of the discernment (this is the sun that discerns), that distinguishes both the natural light from within us and the views coming to us through our mind, he called it as holy light. This is for this one, by gathering and by making perfect all the virtues, it brings the gift of the holiness. That's why too it is greater than all the others and it is their emperor”. The discernment is placed in that light that requires to be seen and the mind that sees that light. The discernment passes the power of the sight from potentiality into act.

<sup>517</sup> Saint Isaac, as all the Eastern Fathers, he had a great confidence in the human nature. This was for they reckoned that the human nature is created in order to see God and to be filled up

The cleanness is the making limpid of the mind's sky, whose bosom is being erected in our winged-up nature<sup>518</sup>. If the mind isn't healthy in nature, the knowledge won't work in it<sup>519</sup>, like the bodily sense lack its sight when harmed because of certain causes. And if the mind is healthy but the knowledge doesn't take place, it will mean that the mind doesn't work outside itself in order to discern among the spiritual realities, like also the eye can be healthy but it doesn't set in working the sight of the sense. Even though the mind remains into its own things, if the grace is not near to them, all of those will remain unworking in fulfilling the service of the discernment, like in the absence of the sun the people spend their night without seeing, even though all their organs are healthy and perfect, namely both the eye and the sight, as also the undiscerned things or which are not discerned<sup>520</sup>. This is what was said: "Into Your light we will see light: (Ps. 35: 9<sup>521</sup>). But if the grace of the Sun thought with the mind it come near to us, and He moves our desire and He entices us to watchfulness, but our mind is not clean, that light will be seen as an empty sky, one non-transparent, because of the thickness of the clouds and of the matters which easily stretch on themselves as a darkness towards the light of the sun which we are gladden by into the joy of the seeing<sup>522</sup>.

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with God's work. The work of God doesn't do else but to set in act a potentiality of the nature. Like the eye is created for the sensitive light that sets in act the eye's power of seeing (because the eye sees this light only when this light is present), likewise is with the natural mind of the man. When these potentialities are set in working the nature manifests in its normal movement. Through the passions which impede the human nature to place on itself in communication with the light, the human nature is becoming callous and it also is being crooked.

<sup>518</sup> "Through the sky of the mind he means the godlike aura of the Ghost".

<sup>519</sup> It is about the spiritual knowledge that is born out of the encounter between mind and the godlike light.

<sup>520</sup> Our nature is necessary in order to see the higher realities, but it cannot activate this power of it without the godlike grace.

<sup>521</sup> In KJB we have: Ps. 36: 9: "For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light."; in ROB we have: Ps. 35: 9: "For at You is the spring of the life, into Your light we will see light." (E. l. t.'s n.)

<sup>522</sup> "Regardless how much one would be taught and wise and endowed with discernment, if the grace of God doesn't lighten him, because of the uncleanness of his passions, he will walk without discernment and in darkness. This is for the discernment from within us and the natural light are without result in their works if they are not lightened by the godlike light". The "empty sky" means maybe a soul empty of deeds, of light, and of grace.

When the sight lips in its power of seeing (of discerning), the nature is empty of work. The soul is impeded from feeling the joy from the Second Sun<sup>523</sup> that dawns over all realities, because of the bodily worries set upon it, worries which cover the truth's light, so that it won't come to us. So, we necessarily need all the said things, especially because one hardly can find all of these in a man, without any diminution, and without any stain, and therefore most of people cannot reach the consummation of a spiritual knowledge. Thus, the lack comes out of the mind's helplessness, out of inappropriately choosing the purpose, out of the confusion of the will, out of the lack of cleanness, and out of not finding a teacher and an adviser; out of these comes the ceasing of the grace. "It is not good to him who is short in speaking, neither the richness, nor the mastery of the great ones" (Wisdom of Sirach 14: 3<sup>524</sup>), out of the impediment of the times, of the places, and of the behaviors.

### **Some Short Heads**

The truth is a sense according to the will of God, being into the feeling of the senses of the spiritual mind. It is a sense tasted by somebody within himself<sup>525</sup>.

The love is the fruit of the prayer leading through its sight the mind that is insatiable in its longing, when the mind perseveres in prayer and when the man prays in his mind only through silent and full of fire thoughts, and warmly.

The prayer is the killing of the thoughts of that will that is according to body's life. He who prays is totally identical to him who has dies to the world. And denying somebody on himself is

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<sup>523</sup> "The first sun is the natural discernment. The second sun is the grace from God. If that one has been existing within us, it has been guided from the second one". But the second one is more properly called as sun, and on can understand Christ by it, in Whose light we see all the realities, by having healthy our power of discernment, like we discern in the light of the seen sun, when our bodily eye is healthy and it has the power of the sensitive discernment. The worldly worries though, they weaken the power of discernment of the mind's eye, that one that we use to see Christ.

<sup>524</sup> This book is not present in KJB. One can find it on [www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu), translated in English from Romanian, as it is given in ROB, together with the other books missing from KJB (14 in total). (E. l. t.'s n.)

<sup>525</sup> Here are analyzed several senses of the spiritual mind, similar to the diversity of the bodily senses. The mind has also a general feeling, but this feeling too is allotted in several senses, as it is in the case of the body's senses.

one with persevering into prayer. And the love for God is in the self-denial of the soul<sup>526</sup>.

As out of the seed of the sweat sprouts out the wheat-ear of the righteousness, likewise out of satiation sprout out the debauchery, and out of gorging with food sprouts out the uncleanness. Out of the hungry and humiliated belly never will come out defiled thoughts. Any digested food becomes an adding to the juices from within us and a natural vigor within us. When the body's limbs are filled with the impulse of the whole body, impulse that reaches into the limbs, it happens to see a bodily image; or, if the heart moves unwillingly, by being pushed by a thought, it will suddenly occur out of that thought an image of pleasure and that will conquer the whole body. Even if the cogitation of him who is righteous and clean in his thoughts, his right-reckoning will be immediately disturbed by that feeling from his limbs and his cogitation will descend from the place it has been before like on some high place. And the decency of the thoughts will roll downwards and his illustrious righteousness will be defiled because of the disturbance brought by passions that enters the heart through the excitement of the limbs. And then half of his power will become helpless, so that one could say that he has forgotten the first purpose of his hope and, even before entering the battle, he is defeated without fighting. And without any effort of his enemies, he has obeyed the will of his helpless body. To all of these is forcedly submitted the will of the virtuous man, by his urge to ceaselessly be satiated. And if he lives peacefully in the realms of the righteousness, he tends to surrender on himself to those things which have never wanted to ascend in his heart.

And when he sleeps alone, he is surrounded by the piling up of those full of vain hallucinations and defiled thoughts, and those thoughts make his bedding unclean, and host of the fornication, and theater of the hallucinations. And when he communicates with his thought by speaking, into a drunkenness of his thoughts, his mind will become agitated and a stormy sea, and his mind will fall under the power of the waves rushing in upon the mind out of the body's sea, because of the gorging of his belly.

Of, you the righteousness, what strongly your beauty shines like, in the sleeping on the floor and in the way of the

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<sup>526</sup> The self-denial, the prayer, and the love for God are united into a whole.

hunger, which take the sleep away from you, through the heavy suffering of the body, when some sort of deep pit opens between the ribs and the stomach, due to the absence of the food! All the food and all the gorging of the belly receive inside us the contrivance of the defiled hallucination and shameless images, which are born out of those ones, and which come out and appear into the hidden place of our cogitation and they tickle us, and they cause us a hidden mating with the defiled things. And the empty stomach makes out thinking a desert place having peace from thoughts and peaceful of any disturbance from thoughts. But the full and satiated stomach is a place of the hallucinations, and a balcony of the inappropriate hallucinations, even if we are alone into wilderness. This is for the satiation, he says, lusts for many things.

When you are found worthy of the godlike gift and of the dispassion of your soul, you must know that that hasn't happened to you because the unclean thoughts stopped crossing through you, or because of not having occurred everywhere within you any movement of bodily thoughts (because no one can be without those), neither because those ones have been easily defeated by you (because the cogitation cannot remain totally undefiled and undisturbed, regardless how highly spiritual the cogitation would be)<sup>527</sup>, but because your mind doesn't renounce to fight them through the thoughts of the higher work and to destroy them; and this is because, when some thought occurs, the mind will be kidnapped from near to that thought, forcedly, by some above-the-will power, that preserves by habituation and by grace the good dough within heart, that is the house of the cogitation<sup>528</sup>.

It is different the mind of the ascetic from the nature's order. That cogitation that by heavenly mercy it has died to the world, that cogitation has only simple thoughts about things,

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<sup>527</sup> In the Greek text is said the opposite: for the mind doesn't get darkened and it doesn't get disturbed regardless how highly spiritual it would be. But we think that such wording is nonsensical.

<sup>528</sup> In the later "Method" of the prayer of the heart, under the name of Nicephorus from Loneliness (*The Romanian Philokalia*, volume VII, p. 31), it will be said that the mind that is gathered during prayer within the heart, it is like a husband returning home from a journey. There, into the warmth of the heart, the mind and its cogitation feel well; there they have found the truest reality. The habituation to appeasement, helped by grace, it makes the mind to banish away the defiled thought that occurs. We are noticing here again the together-working of the man with the grace.

without fight and without war<sup>529</sup>. The consummation yoked together with the body and with the blood reigns over the thoughts springing out of body and out of blood, and it doesn't abolish the nature's ones until the living cogitation of the man still moves into the live upheld by natural elements, namely until the foundation of his mind takes its change in any movement and impulse out of the four juices. And the glory to be of our God forever and ever! Amen.

### Word LXX

**About the Words of the Godlike Scripture, which Urge us to Repentance; and about the Fact that Those Words Have Been Said for the Weakness of the People, in order They not to Perish from the Living God; and about the Fact that They Must not Be Understood as Occasion for Committing Sins**

The manhood asked by the fathers in their godlike writings and the urge to repentance from the Scriptures of the apostles and of the prophets, they must not be understood as a help and as an urge towards sinning, or for transgressing the impassable borders of the Lord which have been ordered from old through the mouth of the saints in all the Scriptures and laws for the destruction of the sin. But they have been given to us for, by liberating our feeling from the fear of the despair, us to have our hope through repentance and by that every man to run and reach the repentance and so no one to continue sinning carelessly. This is for God put the fear in all Scriptures and He showed that He hates the sin.

Why, therefore, the whole mankind was drowned during Noah's days? Wasn't that because of the debauchery, when they got mad after the beauty of the daughters of Cain? This is for, at that time wasn't either love for money or wars. And why were burnt the cities of Sodom? It wasn't because they surrendered

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<sup>529</sup> The expression "simple thought", or "simple meaning" of the things can be found also at Saint Maximos the Confessor. Could it be that Saint Maximos took this expression from Saint Isaac the Syrian? Or it could be that this writing of Saint Isaac dates from after Saint Maximos?



their limbs to the lust and to uncleanness, so that those ones take all of them under their mastery, by people's will and the people indulged themselves to defiled and shameless deeds? It wasn't because of the fornication of a sole man they fell prey to death, through a sole approval, twenty-five thousand of the sons of that first born Israel? Why was throw away from God the giant Samson who was consecrated and sanctified to God since he was in his mother's womb, and who was heralded before his birth by angels, as to John and to Zachariah, he who was found worthy of a great power and of great deeds? It wasn't that because of being defiled his holy limbs by the mating with the whore? And David, the one who was according to God's heart, he who was found - due to his virtues - worthy of being brought to completion through his seed the promise given to his ancestors and out of him to shine Christ for the salvation of the whole world, wasn't him punished for adultery with a sole woman, when he looked with his eyes to her beauty and because of that he received in his soul the arrow? This is for because of that was started him war from his household and he who existed his thigh chased him and for that David repented with many tears, so that he wetted his bedding with his tears and God told him through the prophet: "The Lord removed you sin from you" (2 Kings 12: 13<sup>530</sup>).

But I want you to remember also some things from before those. Whys came the anger and the death upon the house of priest Eli, the righteous old man, who shone into priesthood for forty years? Not because of the lawlessness of his sons, Ophni and Phineas? Because neither him committed sin willingly. But because he didn't have the zeal to ask his sons to honor the Lord, and because he loved his sons more than Lord's commandments. This is in order one not to reckon that the Lord shows His anger upon them who lived on all the days of their life in lawlessness, because of this inappropriate sin, behold that the Lord shows His anger also upon them who truly are His, priests, judges, rulers, and sanctified people of His, whom he entrusted with the doing of wonders. It was shown thus, that when occur some people who transgress His laws, He won't overlook them by any means but, as it is written as Hezekiel: "I told the man, whom I commanded to destroy Jerusalem with the unseen sword, to start in front of My alter

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<sup>530</sup> In KJB this book is usually called as 2 Samuel. (E. l. t.'s n.)

and to have no mercy on old or young” (Heze. 9: 6). This is in order to be shown that are truly love by Him they who walk with fear and awe before Him and who do His will; and saints are to Him they who commit virtuous deeds and who have a clean conscience.

But on them who mock the ways of the Lord, He mocked them too and He throws them away from His face and He withdraws His grace from them. This is because why came out unexpectedly the decision against Balthasar and He condemned him on the way of the hand? Not because he dared to touch the things consecrated to the Lord, which are untouchable, by stealing them from Jerusalem and by drinking out of them with his concubines? So are destroyed, by an unseen blow, also they who consecrated their limbs to God and then they dare again to use them in worldly deeds.

Therefore, let’s not despise while waiting for repentance - by our evil daring - the God words and menaces given us by Him through the godlike Scriptures; let’s not anger Him by our indecent deeds and let’s not defile our limbs after we have consecrated them to serving God. Because, behold, we too have been consecrated to Him as Eli and Elijah and as the sons of the prophets and as the other saints and virgins who committed wonderful deeds and who spoke to God face to face; and like all the ones from after that, as the virginal John, as saint Peter and as the other list of evangelists and of the preachers of the New Settlement, who consecrated on themselves to the Lord and who received His mysteries, some of them out of Lord’s mouth, others through unveilings, and they became mediators between God and people and heralders of the Kingdom all over the world.

### **Word LXXI**

#### **About the Things which One Could Achieve the Changing of the Hidden Meanings together with the Changing of His External Living**

As long as one is in lack of wealth, he always thinks at his exit from this life. He always cogitates at that living from

after resurrection and he prepared for that all the time. He is patient in any temptation coming from being dishonored or from bodily resting which occur in his thinking. And all the time it is moving within his cogitation the thought of despising the world. And he dares in his cogitation and he achieves a strong heart all the time and towards any danger and fear which work the death. And he even doesn't fear the death. This is for he thinks at death all the time as it is drawing closer and he is waiting for it. And his worry is thrown upon God with doubtless hope. And if he meets troubles, he is convinced and he surely knows that they bring him crows. That's why he endures the troubles with the whole joy and he gladly receives them. This is for he knows that God Himself if Him Who appoint those troubles to him, for some unknown gains and through an unshown oikonomia.

And if it happened to him, because of some reason, some destructive things through the work and through the plot of the one who is craftsman in all evil things, on the same instance the lust of his body starts moving within his soul. And he starts thinking at a long life and there starts ascend within his soul thoughts of resting and the things of his body get strengthened in him and he starts searching all the time for gathering the things which can rest him and he exits the freedom that is not submitted to some of the thoughts of the fear. And consequently, he is always cogitating and contriving, in everything, thought which cause fear and he thinks at reasons for fear. This is because of being taken from him that courage of his heart, which he gained it while he was higher than the world, in his state lacking of wealth that was enriching his soul, because of being him now inheritor of the world, on the measure of the things he has achieved. And he received within himself the fear of the things according to the law and according to the rule established by God. This is because on the measure that our limbs work the things of the fear, we become slaves and submitted to serving the fear, according to the words of the Apostle (Hebr. 2: 15).

Before all the passions stay the love for the self. And before all virtues there stays the despising of the resting. He who surrenders his body to resting he causes to his body troubles instead of peace. He who delighted on himself in his youth he becomes slave at old age and he sighs during his last days. As him who keeps his head under water, he cannot

breathe the thin air poured into his emptied lung, likewise it cannot receive the breathing of the feeling of that new world he who sinks his cogitation into the worry for the things from here. As the stench of the death disturbs the sap of the life, likewise the indecent view disturbs the peace of the thought. As it is impossible to live the health and the illness together in the same body and one not to destroy another, likewise it is impossible to inhabit the same house the richness in money and the love and not to be one destroyed by another. As the glass hit by a stone cannot remain intact, neither that saints that parties and remains and talks to a woman can remain into his cleaned without getting defiled. Like the trees are uprooted by the fury of the waters and by the waters' continuous flooding, likewise the love of the world is plucked off the heart by the overpouring of the trials coming upon the body.

Like the medicines clean up the uncleanness of the bad juices from within body, likewise the harshness of the trouble cleans up the evil things from within heart. As the dead cannot feel the living things, likewise the monk's soul buried sunk in quietude is protected against the storm that uses to blow out of feeling the things which move amid people. As he who spares his enemy at war cannot remain unharmed, likewise he who lives in asceticism cannot deliver his soul from perdition by sparing his body. As the child gets scared by the fearsome views and he runs and grabs his parents' clothes, likewise the soul, when pressured upon and troubled by the fear of the temptations, that soul runs closer towards God and ask God in ceaseless prayer. And as long the temptations last rushing in one after another, the monk multiplied his prayer. And when he reaches again at large, he surrenders on himself again to scattering.

As they who are surrendered in the hand of the judges to be punished for their evil deeds, when they get closer to torments they get humble and they immediately confess their evil deed they will get their punishment diminished and they will get away with smaller torments, but if they remain callous regarding their confession, they will add to their torments other torments, and at the end, after many torments, when their ribs will have been covered in wounds, they will unwillingly confess, but their confession will be useless, likewise is to us too: when we are surrendered, out of mercy, because our sins recklessly committed by us, in the hands of the Right Judge of everybody, and we are about to face the stick of the trials, as long as our

punishment for our sins is easy, if when the stick of the Judge comes closer to us we humble on ourselves and we recall the injustice done by us and we confess those in from of Him, we will quickly be delivered through short trials; but if we get callous in our troubles and we do not confess on ourselves as guilty as charged and worthy even to suffer more than we suffer, but we blame the people or, sometimes, the devils, or the righteousness of God, and if we present on ourselves as innocent of such deeds and we do not reckon that God knows us better and that all over the world there are the judgments of God and that without God's commandment no one is punished, then all the things coming upon us will cause us a ceaseless grief and our troubles will become awful and we are tied to one another as by a rope, until we know on ourselves and we humble on ourselves and we feel our injustice. This is because without feeling us these it will be impossible us to come to straightening. And by suffering many troubles all the way to the end of our life, we will make our confession useless, because, by making it then, it won't be able to bring us comforting. But feeling on his own sins it is a gift coming from God and it occurs in his thinking when God sees that that man suffered all sorts of trials, so that that man not to leave from here burdened with all the narrowing and troubles because in such a case that man wouldn't benefit anything of this world. But the understanding come to us not due to the heaviness of our troubles, but because of our nescience. Often, some of us, while being in such troubles, they exit this world guilty and unconfessed, denying their guilt and blaming others. But the merciful God waits that they somehow will get humble, so that Him to forgive them and to deliver them. And God delivers them not only from their trials, but God even forgives their mistakes, by having mercy on the little confession of our heart.

As a certain many, bringing a big gift to the emperor, he will achieve from emperor a smiling look, likewise he who makes his prayer with tears, God, the Great Emperor of the ages will forgive him his mistakes and God will make him gain from His a full of grace look.

Like that sheep that leaves the flock and walks separately from its shepherd will come night to the wolves' den, likewise that monk who parts with the assembly of his companions under the motif of a living in quietude, he will be met by views and he will walk towards those and he will get close to those,

and thus he will cross through all the things one can see in the cities.

Like a man who carries on his shoulder a very precious stone, and he leaves for a trip on a road haunted by thieves and famous for evil things, he will be all the time dominated by the fear of being attacked, likewise him who carries the precious stone of the righteousness and he walks among the world on the road of his enemies, he won't have hope for escaping his enemies and the plunderers of the earth, until he will have reached the place (the monastery of the monastic cell) of his tomb (that is the place of his hope). Could him who carries the very precious stone not to fear? Likewise, the monk too doesn't know in what place and out of what hidings and at what time the thieves can occur within him and they can disrobe him of his hope. And he will reach robbed his house, that is the time of his old age.

Like that man who drinks wine and he gets drunk on the day of the weeping, he will forget about all the grief for his pains, likewise him who is drunk with the love for God he will forgive, in this world of the crying, all his pains and sorrows and he will become insensitive towards all the passions of the sin, due to his drunkenness. His heart leans on his hope in God and his soul is a light and winged bird; and all the time his cogitation is elevated from earth and it flies above people, in his occupation with his own thoughts, and it is delighted in the immortal realities of The Highest Whom to be the glory and the mastery forever and ever! Amen.

## **Word LXXII**

### **It Comprises Useful Teachings, Full of the Wisdom of the Ghost**

The faith is the door of the mysteries. This is for what the bodily eyes are to the things submitted to the senses, likewise it is the faith, with its understanding eyes, to the hidden

treasuries<sup>531</sup>. We have, as the fathers say, two souly eyes, as we have the two eyes of our body. And we do not use both of them identically in seeing. With one spiritual eye we look at the hidden realities of God's glory, hidden within things, namely God's power and wisdom and His Providence together eternal towards us, that one that we can know out of the greatness of His organization. Likewise, with this spiritual eye we look at the angelic groups together-serving with us. And with the other spiritual eye we look at the glory of His holy nature, when He deigns to lead us inside the spiritual mysteries, and when He opens the sea of the faith within our cogitation<sup>532</sup>.

The repentance has been given to the people after Baptism, as grace upon grace. This is for the repentance is the second birth out of God, and the gift whose downpayment we have received it through faith, and we are going to receive that gift by repentance. The repentance is the door of the mercy open them who search for it. Through this door we enter to mercy; and if we do not cross through this door, we won't find the mercy. Because all of us committed sin, according to the godlike Scripture, "being us straightened as a gift through His gift" (Rom. 3: 24). The repentance is the second grace that is born within heart out of faith and fear. And the fear is the parental stick guiding us until we will have reached the spiritual Paradise of the goods. And when we reach there, it leaves us and it turns back.

The Paradise is the love of God which the delectation with all happinesses is comprised in<sup>533</sup>. It is the place where the Blessed Paul was fed nourished with an above-nature food. And after he tasted there out of the tree of life he shouted out, saying: "The things which the eye hasn't seen and the ear hasn't heard and at the man's heart haven't ascended, those

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<sup>531</sup> The faith is a spiritual sense that enters the touch with the godlike and mysterious world, like the bodily sight enters the touch with the seen things. Through faith enters the godlike and full of mystery meanings of godlike powers, as the rays of the seen things enter our being through our sensitive eyes.

<sup>532</sup> Saint Isaac doesn't separate the faith from cogitation. Through faith the cogitation enters the endlessness of meanings, above meaning, of the godlike life. That's why the cogitation is faith too, or the faith is cogitation as well. This second eye allows us to see God within us, in this ocean that enters us.

<sup>533</sup> The faith is the door towards mysteries, or towards the Paradise of the living together with God; and the love is the interior of the Paradise, or the place where these mysteries are lived at. Especially, the love of God is the tree of life from Paradise. That's why Christ is the Savior, as the tree of this new and eternal life.

things have bene prepared by God to them who love Him” (1 Cor. 2: 9). From this tree was forbidden Adam, by the advice of the devil. The tree of life is the love of God which Adam fell off and therefore Adam never met the joy again<sup>534</sup>.

And into the soil of the brambles there worked the darkness. They who have been deprived of the love of God they eat the bread of their sweat in their deeds, even if they walk the right way. This was the first created man ordered to eat after his falling. Until we do not find the love, our work is in the land of the brambles and we sow and we reap amidst brambles, even if our seed is the seed of the righteousness; and we are pricked by thorns all the time, and until we have straightened on ourselves, we will live into the sweat of our face. But when we have found the love, we will be nourished with heavenly bread, and we will be strengthened without work or tiredness. The heavenly bread is Christ Who descended from heavens and Who gave life to the world<sup>535</sup>. And this is the bread of the angels.

He who has found the love he east Christ; he east Christ on all days and all the time and by that he will become immortal<sup>536</sup>. “The he who eats, he says, that bread that I will give it to him, he won’t see the death ever” (Jn. 6: 58). Blessed is him who eats the bread of the love that is Christ. This is for him who nourishes on himself out of love he nourishes on himself with Christ Who is the God over all realities, as John confesses it by saying: “God is love” (1 Jn. 4: 8). So, he who lives in love he brings fort the fruit of the life out of God and he breathes in the present world the air of the resurrection out of the realities from here. In this sky will be delighted the saints after resurrection. The love is the Kingdom secretly promised by our Savior to His disciples, that they will eat it in His Kingdom. For what is it: “Eat and drink at the table of the Kingdom” (Lk. 22: 30) except the love? This is for the love can feed the man

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<sup>534</sup> The joy, the love, and the true life are one. They are God, the Person or the communion of Persons infinite in love and in life. There is no joy outside the love. And the love is only among persons. And the love come in a full manner to us only out of the godlike Person. The godlike Person entered by embodiment on the plan accessible to us, He is the tree whom we receive through the fruit of the imperishable life.

<sup>535</sup> The fruit from the tree of life can also be called as heavenly bread, the bread of the immortality. Both of them show Christ out of Whose life and imperishable love we receive the immortal life, for His love is inexhaustible, and of His love we won’t ever get satiated.

<sup>536</sup> We ought to notice that: he who is nourished with the godlike love he is immortal, for he will never get satiated of that love and he is being nourished out of the infinite and personal love of God. At this love we must think also when we are imparted with Christ in Eucharist.



instead of food and of drink. "This is the wine that gladdens the heart of the man" (Ps. 103: 16<sup>537</sup>). Blessed is him who drinks this wine. Out of this wine drank the debauched and they got ashamed; and the sinners, and they left the ways of their passions; and the drunkards, and they started fasting<sup>538</sup>; and the rich, and they wanted the poverty; and they who hunger they have been enriched with the hope; and they who are sick, they have become powerful; and the untaught have become wise<sup>539</sup>.

But as it is impossible to cross the sea without a ship, likewise no one can cross towards love without fear. That stinking sea placed between us and the understanding Paradise we cannot cross it except through the ship of the repentance driven by the oarsmen of the fear. If these oarsmen of the fear do not stir the ship of our repentance, which we cross with the sea of this world towards God, we will get drowned into that stinking sea. Our repentance is the ship; the fear is its helmsman; the love is the godlike shore. So, the fear places us into the ship of the repentance and it crosses us over that sea of the stinking life and it brings us to the godlike shore, that is the love, which will be reached by all of them who live in asceticism, all of them who are burdened with repentance. And when we have reached the love, we will have reached at God. And our trip will have come to an end and we will have crossed to the shore that is beyond the world, where there is the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. And may Him make us worthy of His glory and love and fear! Amen.

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<sup>537</sup> In KJB we have: Ps. 104: 14-15: "He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; // And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart."; in ROB we have: Ps. 103: 16-17: "Him to get bread out of earth and the wine gladdens the heart of the man; // to gladden the face with oil and the bread strengthen the heart of the man." (E. l. t.'s n.)

<sup>538</sup> He who drinks the wine and who eats the bread of the clean love he will no longer love the wine and the bodily foods. That wine is sweeter and more strengthening than the wine of the body and that heavenly bread is more nourishing than any bodily food.

<sup>539</sup> The love gives not only joy but also understanding, knowledge both to the loved one and who loves. He who drinks the wine of this love, or who eats its of-life-maker bread, he will no longer feel the need for food, for pleasure, for the richness from this world. All of those get fade in comparison to the godlike love.

**Word LXXIII****Which Contains Useful Advices which I Have Uttered with Love to Them Who Listened to This Word with Humbleness**

There is no good thought occurring within heart which not to come out of the grace of God. And there is not cunning thought drawing near to our soul, except those destine to try us and to tempt us. That man who has reached to know the measure of his helplessness, he will have reached the consummation of the humbleness. That one that guides the gifts towards the man is the heart moving towards ceaseless giving of thanks<sup>540</sup>.

That one guiding the temptation towards the soul it is the speaking-against thought, that is always moving within our heart. God bears all people's helplessness, but God doesn't suffer that man that always speaks against, without God rebuking that man towards advising that man<sup>541</sup>. In such thoughts it is that soul that is stranger to any light of the knowledge. That mouth that always gives thanks it receives the blessing from God; and within that heart that lives in giving-of-thanks there will occur the grace. Before the grace there walks the humbleness<sup>542</sup>, and before the advising rebuke there walks the self-appreciation. The pride one will be allowed to fall into blasphemy; and he who boasts on himself for his virtue with the deed he will be allowed to fall into fornication. And he who boasts within his wisdom he will be allowed to fall into the darkness traps of the nescience.

That man that is estranged to any remembrance of God he bears within his heart his envy against his neighbor, and he think at his neighbor with naughtiness. He who, in his remembrance of God, he honors all the people, he will find help from all the people by the hidden will of God. He who defends

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<sup>540</sup> Only the giving-of0thanks opens the way to the coming gifts; and only in the giving-of-thanks it is shown that the man realizes the greatness of the gifts, namely that he knows how to truly use the gifts.

<sup>541</sup> To the speaking-against man, to the ingrate, the gift will be taken away from him, in order that man to realize how much he misses that gift, namely to realize that he no longer has what he needs by himself.

<sup>542</sup> If the grace comes there where are given thanks for the grace, before the grace there appears the humbleness, or the conscience of needing the grace.

the man whom it has been done injustice to, he has God fighting for him, He who bestows his arm to the help of his neighbor he will receive the arm of God to his help. He who condemns his brother into his evilness, he will find God as his accuser<sup>543</sup>. He who does justice to his brother into his hidden, he will be healed of his evilness; and he who condemns his brother in an assembly he will increase his won wounds. He who secretly defends his brother he makes shown the strength of his love; and he who shames off his brother in other people's eyes, he shows the bigness of his envy. That friends that rebukes hiddenly, he is a wise doctor; and he who wants to heal somebody in the eyes of the man he actually condemns him. Forgetfulness of all mistakes it is the sign of the mercy and of the love; and the condemnation of the mistakes it is the sign of the cunning thoughts. He who rebukes towards healing he rebukes out of love. And he who seeks for revenge, he is empty of love. God rebukes us out of love, not to avenge Himself on us, let that not be, but He want His image to be healed, and He doesn't stay angry for a long time. This kind of love it pursues the straightening and it doesn't passionately deviate towards hatred. The wise righteous is like God, for he doesn't punish the man at all by avenging himself due to his evilness, but he punishes the man in order to correct him or in order to frighten others. And that rebuking that is not like this one, it won't be towards advising. He who does the good for rewards he will quickly change on himself. And he who in the power of his knowledge he gets illuminated through contemplation (sight), by the knowledge that is in God, though he then gets out of his body, he won't get haughty in his thought neither he will deviate ever from his virtue.

He who enlightens his cogitation in order to make it worthy of the reward from God, he has reached the deep of the humble cogitation with his soul and with his body. Before somebody get close to knowledge, he ascends and he descend in his living; but when he gets close to knowledge, he will be elevated whole. But regardless how much he is elevated, the ascension of his knowledge won't end until it will come that age of the glory when he will take his richness. This if for, the more the man get consummate in God, the more than man will walk in God's ways. In the present age God shows His face, but not

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<sup>543</sup> This is for all the people are the children of God.

as it is, because regardless how high the righteous ascend to seeing God, they still look at God's face as in a mirror. But there, they see the showing of the truth<sup>544</sup>.

That fire lit in dry woods will be quenched with difficulty. Likewise, the fire of the heat of God, that comes and it is ignited within the heart of him who has rejected the world, it won't quench and it will be more powerful than the fire<sup>545</sup>.

That cogitation that has found the wisdom of the Ghost it is like a man sailing in a big ship, which he gets on board and he crossed with the sea of this world and he reaches the shore of the future age. Such is the feeling of the future age in this world, as a small island surrounded by the sea; and he who gest closer to it he will no longer get tired by the waves of the hallucinations of this age.

The merchant when he has finished his trade, he hurries up to turn back to his home. The monk, as long as he still needs the deeds, he gets saddened at the thought of the separation from his body. But when his soul feels that he has redeemed the whole time and that he has taken his downpayment, he will desire the future age. As long as he is one the sea, the merchant bears the fear within his bones, lets the waves will stir up and so the hope for his work to get sunk. The monk, as long as he is in this world, he is mastered by fear in his living, lest the storm to rise up against him and his thing that he has been gathering up since his youth and all the way up to his old age, to be lost. The merchant keeps his eyes on the shore and the monk keeps his eyes at the time of his death.

The sailor looks at the stars when he crosses through the middle of the sea and he directs his ship according to the stars, until he reaches the shore. The monk looks at the prayer, for the prayer guides him and it directs his trip towards that shore which his living moves towards, in his ceaseless prayer. The sailor looks at the shore where he will anchor his ship and

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<sup>544</sup> "Here we see like in a mirror" (1 Cor. 13: 12), because we cannot detach on ourselves from the images of the world, or even from our internal image (from our senses), that is influenced by the body, so that we are unable to see God in Himself. That's why we are endlessly advancing towards an ever-truer sight of God through the created images, evermore spiritualized, ever more transparent to God. But in the future age all the images will be consummately overwhelmed by the spirituality of God as Person, as also our soul will be in an ever more spiritualized body, a body increasingly crossed through by God. So that through us God Himself will see on Himself.

<sup>545</sup> Our body thinned in his juices it is like a dry wood. It feels more intensely the godlike fire.

where he will take what he needs from, and then he will direct his ship towards another shore<sup>546</sup>. Similar it is the travel of the monk as long as he still is in this life. He crosses from shore to shore, or from knowledge to knowledge, and he advances by changing the shores, or the knowledge, until he will get out of sea and of his trip and he will reach the truest city of all where those who inhabit it will never leave from to undertake another trade, but each of them will rest into his richness<sup>547</sup>. Blessed is him whose trade hasn't been mixed with this vain world, inside this great state; blessed is him whose ship hasn't been wrecked, but he will joyfully reach the shore.

The diver sinks into the sea naked until he finds the pearl. The wide monk crosses through his life naked until he finds within himself that precious pearls that is Christ Jesus. And when he finds Him, he won't want to gain anything of the existing things. The pearl is guarded into treasury; the monk's food is kept inside the quietude. The virgin is harmed in assemblies and in multitude of people and the monk's cogitation is harmed in the encounters with many. The bird runs, from place to place, towards its nest in order to breed offsprings; that monk that has right-reckoning (discernment) he hurries up towards his dwelling place in order to produce within himself the fruit of the life. The snake, when the whole his body has been crushed, he still guards his head; the monk ceaselessly keeps his faith that is the beginning of his life. The cloud covers the sun up; the much words will cover up that soul that started to be lightened in the sight (contemplation) of the prayer.

That bird called as "erodium" gets gladdened and it rejoices, according to the word of the wisemen, when it parts with the world and it leaves for a desert place and it lives there. So, the soul of the monk receives the heavenly joy when he gets far from people and he leaves for living in the middle of the appeasement and he waits there for the time of his death. They

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<sup>546</sup> These ones are the "epektasis" of Saint Gregory of Nyssa. Any level of height that is reached, it will open the perspective towards another height. The shores are states of resting into God, which interrupt the fight against the storm of the passions and of the troubles, and which are short tastings of the definitive resting into God, anticipating the future life.

<sup>547</sup> He is rejected the Origenistic theory, or the theosophy and the anthroposophy, about new incarnations, or about new fallings of the souls into other bodies, because of the boredom of the resting into God. God is an ocean of meanings and of love never to be fully comprised, which nobody gets bored in and which have no limit which one could cross over.

said about that bird called Sirin that anyone who hears the voice of its song they get so enslaved that they will follow that bird's travel through the desert, because, due to the sweetness of that song they forget even about their own lives, and in the end, they will fall and die. What happens to the soul is similar to that. This is for, when the sweetness of the song of the words of God will resound within the soul, that is imprinted into the feeling of the mind, that soul will start whole to pursuit that, and that soul forgets about the bodily life and his body is deprived of his lusts and that soul will be elevated towards God since this life.

The tree, if it doesn't reject its leaves before, it won't sprout out new leaves. The monk, until he casts out of his heart the previous memories of his, he won't bring forth new fruits into Jesus Christ.

The rain makes abundant the fruits of the earth, and the care from God makes abundant the fruit of our soul. The shell, out of which the pearl is made, it builds up within itself, as they say, some sort of spark of lightening, and the shell receive the matter from the air, and until then the shell is an empty bark; the heart of the monk, until it hasn't received the heavenly content into understanding, it has an empty work and it doesn't give birth inside its shell the fruit of the comforting.

That dog that licks its wound it drinks his own blood and it won't know the harm coming out of its blood's sweetness; that monk that bows down to drink the vain-glory he drinks, in the same time, his life, and he won't feel the harm brought by that sweetness which he enjoyed of, for an instant. The worldly glory is a rock covered by the sea's waves, which the sailor doesn't know about until his ship gets wrecked and it gets full of water. It does so the vain-glory to the man until it totally sink the man destroying him. The fathers said about it, that within that soul that is mastered by the vain-glory, the once defeated and cast out passions will come back within. A small cloud covers up the sun's disk but the sun will remain very hot after that cold has passed from there. A little idleness covers up the soul, but the joy from after that it will be great.

Do not get closer to the words of the mysteries from the Holy Scriptures without the help from God, that can be received through prayer and asking, but rather say: "Lord, give me to perceive the feeling of that power from within those words" (The Prayer of the Reading). You must reckon that the key of the true

meanings from the godlike Scriptures it is the prayer. When you want to get closer to God with your heart, you must firstly show your desire through your bodily toils. Out of these is the beginning of the living. This is for the heart gets much closer to God when the man lacks the necessary things and when he gets satisfied with a sole kind of food; and that follows to the deeds. This is for the Lord has made out of this the foundation of the consummation.

You reckon the non-working as the beginning of the soul's darkening<sup>548</sup>. And you must reckon the confabulations as darkness over darkness. And you must reckon the second thing as cause of the first thing. And this is because, even the useful words when overused they cause darkness, how much more will do so the vain-words? The soul will be made poor by the much-speaking, even if the much speaking is done in the fear of God. Sop, the darkness of the soul comes from the disorder of the living.

The measure and the border in living enlighten the cogitation and banish away the confusion<sup>549</sup>. The confusion of the cogitation because of disorder it caused darkness to the soul. And the darkness brings disturbance. The peace comes out of the good order and the light is born within soul out of peace. This is for out of peace springs the clean sky<sup>550</sup>. And as the heart gets closer to the wisdom of the Ghost by estrangement from the world, the heart will receive the joy from God and the heart will feel within soul the power of discerning the wisdom of the Ghost from the wisdom of the world. This is for in the wisdom of the Ghost the silence masters within soul; and in the worldly wisdom there is the spring of the scattering. And after finding the first wisdom you soul will be filled up with much humble-cogitation and kindness and with that peace that

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<sup>548</sup> It is remarkable the observation made by Saint Isaac that the idleness is a beginning of darkness and that the deeds are beginning of light. He who does the good he gets enlightened with kindness, and he lives in the luminous horizon of the communion and he lightens up the rationalities of the things.

<sup>549</sup> The measure and the border still have in their depth the way of the eternal novelty. But the lack of measure accentuated a sole power of the soul and it weakens the others.

<sup>550</sup> The clean sky allows the sun and the sunlight to be seen. And the clean sky is that soul lacking the disturbance, the storm, namely a soul mastered by peace. The peace of the mind is that clean sky between the mind and the Sun Christ. Nothing interposes between mind and Christ. The mind can wholly focus itself on Christ. The mind is not impeded by anything in this permanent focusing towards Christ, in cogitating at Christ, in entering Him through cogitating and feeling.

reigns over all your thoughts. Consequently, also all the limbs stop and get appeased from the disturbance and from their restlessness. And after finding the second wisdom you will gain the pride into your thought and untold changes of thoughts and the disturbance of your mind and the shamelessness of your senses and haughtiness<sup>551</sup>. Do not reckon that that man who is tied to the bodily things he will have daring in his prayer done by him before God. The cheap soul is lacking the wisdom, while the merciful soul will be made wise by God.

Like the oil fuels the candle's light, likewise the mercifulness nourished the knowledge within soul<sup>552</sup>. The key of the heart towards the godlike gifts it has been given to the love for the neighbor; and on the measure of the untying the heart from the ties of the body, the door of the knowledge will be opened in front of the heart. Receiving the understanding means the crossing of the soul from a world to another world<sup>553</sup>. What beautiful like and what worthy to be praised like it is the love for the neighbor, when our care for the love for our neighbor doesn't detach us from our love for God! What sweet is like the encounter with our spiritual brothers, when we can keep together with that also the encounter with God! So, it is good to take care of our brothers too, to the extent we are allowed to do that by the appropriateness. And this means not to fall, because of that, off the hidden work and living and off the ceaseless speaking to God<sup>554</sup>. This is for the disturbance caused by the second work comes out of the way of being of the

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<sup>551</sup> The peace of the mind is like a clean sky which Sun Christ is seen through; the peace of the mind is united with the wisdom brought by the Ghost that doesn't allow the mind to go after all sorts of unimportant thoughts, among which some thoughts are really ugly, so that one is embarrassed even of speaking about them. Such a man no longer has either the peace or the daring of the prayer towards God.

<sup>552</sup> This is for the mercifulness nourishes the love and into love there is the knowledge of the neighbor, for he opens himself to you. But when you succeed in making the another to open himself to you, you succeed that relatedly to God as well. Or, through the another who is open to you, you see God.

<sup>553</sup> The key of the understanding is the crossing from the world of the objects to the world of the subjects and therefore to the world of the godlike Subject as well. The knowledge of the material realities it is not actually "understanding". The "understanding is that that takes place among people, as subjects, and therefore between man and God too.

<sup>554</sup> The love for people is kept clean through the love for God. My fellow human receives, in my eyes, when I see him into God, a mysterious holiness. When we fall off cleanness and steadfastness, in what concerns our love for our fellow human, we no longer are able either to cleanly and steadfastly love God. And vice versa. In this case the mind isn't capable of any of these loves in cleanness and lastness.



first work. The mind is not capable of both dialogues concomitantly.

The seeing of the people from the world it causes disturbance to that soul that has rejected the people from the world for the thing of God. Continuously speaking with our spiritual brothers will harm us. And concerning the laymen, it will harm even only seeing them from outside. The realities encountered by senses won't stop the bodily doing<sup>555</sup>. But he who wants to pick up, from his thought the joy, by working the hidden things, he will suffer of disturbance in the resting of his heart even by only hearing the voices, without looking at their origin. The internal death (toward the world) is not committed without the non-working of the senses, and the bodily living desires the wakening up of the senses, while the souly living desires the wakening up of the heart.

As on the plan of the nature the soul is bigger than the body, likewise, the work of the soul is bigger than the body's work. And like in the beginning the conceiving of the soul preceded the soul's instilling, likewise the bodily deeds precede the souly work. And there is a great power in the small but persevering deed. This is for the soft and small drop of water that perseveres, it will drill through the hard stone.

When the resurrection of the spiritual man comes closer within you, it will wake up within you the death towards everything and within your soul that becomes unlike the creation it will warm up the joy; and your thoughts will be closed within yourself, into that sweetness existing within your heart<sup>556</sup>. But when the world resurrects within you, the scattering of your cogitation will multiply, together with the small and fickle thought. And I call world the passions which are born by scattering. And when the passions will be born and they will grow up, they will become sins and they will kill the man. Like children cannot be born without having a mother, likewise the passions are not born without the scattering of the cogitation, neither the done sin is born without the dialogue with the passions.

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<sup>555</sup> The good deeds through body.

<sup>556</sup> The death towards all the realities of the world and even the death of the former man, it is not a Nirvanic insensibility, but it is an internal joy and sweetness, and those exceed any worldly joy and sweetness, and they are nourished out of the deep meanings and above understanding and clean meanings of the thoughts of everybody who have unveiled their luminous roots, through their clean heart, into God.

When the patience multiplies within our souls, that is a sign that we have received for above, hiddenly, the grace of the comforting. The strength of the patience is greater than the joy thoughts occurring within heart. The life in God is the death of the senses. When the heart lives the senses die. And the resurrection of the senses is the death of the heart. And when the senses resurrect that is the sign that the heart died for God. The conscience doesn't receive the straightening out of the virtues which are committed among people<sup>557</sup>.

That virtue done by somebody for another it cannot clean up the soul. This is because of being reckoned in front of God as a deed done for receiving a payment<sup>558</sup>. But that one done by the man within himself it is reckoned as consummate virtue and it consummated both of these: it is reckoned both as rewardable and as bringing the cleanness. That's why, you smut part with the first one and pursuit the second one. This is because parting with the first one without taking care of the second one it is an obvious falling from God. And the second one fills up the place of the first one too<sup>559</sup>.

Resting and non-working mean together the soul's perdition and they can harm us more than the devils do. When you force your helpless body to deeds over its measure, you gather within your soul darkness upon darkness and you rather cause disturbance to your body. And if you surrender your healthy body to resting and non-working, your body will consummate the whole evilness into your soul that inhabits your body, and even if somebody desires the good a lot, after a little while even that thought of good that he still had had it will be case out of him. When the soul is drunk with the joy of his hope and with the gladness for God, the body will no longer feel the troubles even if it is weak. This is for, despite the soul bears a twofold burden it won't weaken, but the body rejoices together with the soul of soul's delectation, for the soul will collaborate

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<sup>557</sup> Here is about those virtues which the people cause pleasure to one another, or which they reciprocally serve their interests thought, without thinking at God. Those are good but passing and superficial deeds, without steadfastly building the man up through steadfast virtues.

<sup>558</sup> Here is being rejected the theory of the merits for deeds. The truly good deeds are those done out of love, and not for payment.

<sup>559</sup> By bringing the cleanness it will bring also the reward. Or the cleanness itself is the true payment. And the cleanness is the exclusive preoccupation with God for Himself. The last kind of virtue keeps the place for the first one too. But not the vice versa. But it will be even worse when one doesn't pursuit even the first kind of virtue.

with the body even if the body is weak. This happens to the man when his soul enters the joy of the Ghost.

Brother, if you guard your tongue, you have been given from God the gift of the pricking of the heart in order you to be able to see your soul through that. And through the pricking of your heart, you will enter the joy of the Ghost. And if your tongue defeats you, you believe me that you will never get rid of darkness. This is for if you have your heart clean you will have your mouth clean as well, as the blessed John said.

When you want to urge somebody to good, you firstly resting him bodily and then after you will honor him with words of love. This is for nothing persuades the man to come to decency and nothing makes the man to cross from the evil things to the good things as the bodily goods do, or as the honor he sees that he received from you. The more somebody enters the fight for God, the more he dares within his heart when praying. And the more the man is attracted to more things, the more he will lack the help from God. Do not be sad because of the impulses of your body. This is for God will take those away from you consummately. Do not fear your death. This is for God has prepared the things in order you to be elevate above your death. God's to be the glory and the mastery forever and ever! Amen.

## **Word LXXIV**

### **About the Example and the Resemblance Comprised in the Meaning of the Sunday and of the Saturday**

The Sunday if the mystery of the knowledge of that truth that is not received together with the body and with the blood, for it is above any cogitation<sup>560</sup>. In this age we do not have the eighth day either the true Sunday<sup>561</sup>. This is for he who said that God rested on the seventh day, he showed the stop of this

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<sup>560</sup> The Sunday was fully known into the resurrected Christ as our supreme truth and our final target. This truth isn't received with our body and blood from now and that's why this truth is above the cogitation starting out of our body and blood.

<sup>561</sup> The millennium cannot be installed in the present way of the world; the eternal resting and happiness will take place only in the future age.

life (Gen. 2: 2)<sup>562</sup>. This is for the tomb is for the body and the tomb is from within world. There have been given six days for the ploughing of the life and they are consummated by keeping the commandments. The seven days make whole the first six days into tomb. And the eighth day does alike, through exiting the tombs.

Like those who have been found worthy of it they receive here the mysteries of the Sunday in the image of the example, but they do not receive that day itself in a bodily manner, likewise those who live in asceticism they receive here the mysteries of the Saturday but they do not receive the Saturday itself into truth, that is the ceasing of everything that saddens and the resting of everything that disturbs<sup>563</sup>. This is for God have given us the mystery but not the true work in the living from here.

The true and the matchless Sunday is the tomb, that shows what it means the consummate ceasing of the troubles and of the passions and of the ploughing that resists those. In the tomb rests (Sabbathizes) the whole human nature, namely the soul and the body. God organized in six days the being of this world and he created the natural elements and He gave existence to their ceaseless movement towards serving. And the natural element won't stop in their road until the detachment. And out of their power, namely out of the first created natural elements have been created our bodies. But God hasn't given even stopping form their movement, neither to our bodies which have been created out of them God has given them to stop from working the earth (from their ploughing)<sup>564</sup>. And as border for

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<sup>562</sup> God's resting on the seventh day shows us that this world isn't endless.

<sup>563</sup> In the present life we have only from time to time a ceasing of the work for combating the passions and the troubles, but not a total ceasing. So, we have here only an anticipation in image of that liberation. Likewise, we do not receive here but from time to time a short living into God, or the Sunday in image, but not yet the true and eternal Sunday or the undiminished communion with the resurrected Christ.

<sup>564</sup> It is the same teaching about the purpose of the movement as taking us towards God and as being given by God, a teaching contrary to Origenism, as we can find also at Saint Maximos the Confessor (*Ambigua*). So, the movement of the natural elements won't stop here before their detachment in individual elements. We won't have here the resting from the movement, or the Sunday (the millennium of the resting), as long as the present way of world's existence lasts. This way of world's existence is destined to move us also towards consummation, as the natural elements composing the body move too, and within which their movement causes us the temptations towards sin. The man must work the earth that brings forth brambles, in order the man to bring the world towards consummation, as long as the earth still is in the present

ceasing God placed within us the moment which it will be accomplished the kinship of their last state with their first state, and that means detachment of the life<sup>565</sup>. Adam was told so: “Into the sweat of your face you will eat your bread”. And until when? “Until you will turn back into the earth which you have been take out of, that it will sprout out to you thorns and brambles”, which are the mysteries of the ploughing of this life, until it lasts. But since that night which the man sweated, the Lord changed the sweat that was producing thorns and brambles, into the sweat of the prayer and into the ploughing of the righteousness<sup>566</sup>.

God left Adam to toil into that sweat for more than five thousand and five hundreds of years. This is because until then the way of the saints it wasn't unveiled, as the godlike apostle said (Eph. 3: 1). But on the final days God came and commanded the freedom to change sweat for sweat. So, God didn't order the full ceasing, but only the changing. This is for God showed His love for us for enduring our heavy suffering tied to earth. So, if we stop sweating into prayer, we will truly reap thorns. This is because the absence of the prayer will bring the earth's ploughing through the body, that one that sprouts out thorns by its nature. This is because our passions truly are thorns sprouting out within us out of the seed existing within our body. As long as we bear Adam's image, we will necessarily bear Adam's passions too. This is because of being impossible that the earth to stop bringing forth an offspring according to its nature. And this offspring is the nephew of the nature, as the earth coming out of our bodies, according to the testimony of

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form. This work won't cease as long as the body exists in this form, with its natural element non-transfigured, and in movement.

<sup>565</sup> The work of body's cultivation (the fight against passions, the enduring patiently of the troubles) will cease when this body will come back to its first state, namely to that state which the body would have reached if it hadn't fallen. But the body won't reach that state except after the detachment of the life; namely at the true Sunday the body won't reach except after the true Saturday will have come.

<sup>566</sup> The working of the virtues. Until the coming of our Lord Christ our sweat didn't quite succeed in stopping the sprouting out of the passions. We sweated more in the passions' service. Into the Lord it succeeded. In Him we succeed too. But the troubles remain. We need the passions as we need our sweat, in order us to achieve the virtues, as it is told further on. Our Lord hasn't stopped the sweat, but he has changed the sweat's mode and effect. Now we are sweating in patience and in prayer. The thorns will be stopped by these ones from sprouting out, but only if the prayer is done continuously as another movement, as another toil. The movement, by and large, it doesn't stop either after Christ.

God: "The earth which you have been taken out of" (Gen. 3: 9). The earth gives birth to thorns. And the speaking (rational) earth gives birth to passions.

If the Lord has been mysteriously present in all times, in all the diverse works of His oikonomia<sup>567</sup>, and until the ninth hour of the Friday He didn't stop Himself from His work and toil (that is the mystery of the ploughing from our life), and on Saturday He rested into tomb, so where are they who say that the Saturday, or the resting from passions, it takes place during this life<sup>568</sup>? (And about Sunday there are big things to be said).

Our Sunday is the day of our burial. Then it is truly rested (Sabbathized) our nature. So, it is imposed to us as a necessary thing to pluck the thorns out of our nature as long as the earth still stays in our nature. By our perseverance in ploughing the thorns from our nature will be made fewer. But our nature cannot be fully cleaned up of them<sup>569</sup>. And if this is so, if through the laziness for a while, if through a small carelessness, the thorns get multiplied and so they will cover the face of the earth and they will choke your crop and your toil will be destroyed, we must clean up our body's earth daily. This is because ceasing to do this work it will multiply the thorns.

May us clean on ourselves of those thorns by the grace of Him Who is of-one-being and the Only Begotten Son of God Who it is due the glory together with His without-beginning Father and with the of-live-giver His Ghost, forever and ever! Amen.

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<sup>567</sup> The presence of Christ in all the times of the old law was affirmed by many previous fathers. And it was affirmed even Christ's presence in the diverse types of His savior work. For instance, Saint Cyril of Alexandria speaks about the presence of Christ in the sacrifices of the Old Testament (*Worshipping into Ghost and Truth*). But at Saint Isaac we have the general affirmation of this fact.

<sup>568</sup> One can see that in the time of Saint Isaac were still lasting the millenarists from the first Christian centuries. But maybe Saint Isaac refers by and large to all of them who say that the man can reach - while still living the present earthly life - a full liberation of passions. They who uphold today the millennium from the end they are consistent to themselves when arguing that they can reach, individually, even from now, a total absence of the sin.

<sup>569</sup> But, out of the fact that we cannot reach on earth to a total sinlessness one must not draw the contrary (Protestant) conclusion that we cannot do anything for diminishing the number of our sins. The passions remain as possibilities and therefore the temptations remain too, as long as we are on earth. That's why, we must always take vigil and we must toil increasingly much in order to weaken those. This is the way of the saints.

## Word LXXV

### **Story about Some Saints and Some of Their All-Pious Words. And about their Wonderful Living**

On day I went to the monastic cell of a holy brother and because of my helplessness I laid myself down in a corner, in order I to be cared by God. This was because where I was, I had no acquaintance. And I saw this brother waking up at night before time and having the habit to start the program of his prayers before his brothers did. After he sang many verses from the Psalms, suddenly, while he was still doing that, he left the prayer and fell on his face and he hit his head on the ground for a hundred times or maybe more, with that warmth ignited within his heart by grace. And after that he stood as kissed the cross of the Master and he bowed down again and he kissed the cross and then he threw on himself on his face again. And he kept this program so that I couldn't count the multitude of his kneelings. This is for who was able to count the prostrations of that brother, which he was doing on each night? This is for he kissed the cross for twenty times with fear and with warmth, with a love mixed with awe and he again started singing psalms. And on occasions, due to the much heat of the thoughts which were burning him, so that was no longer able to endure their heat, he shouted out overwhelmed by joy. This was because he was no longer able to contain himself. I saw him and I wondered much of the grace of that brother and of his ascetic toils and of his watchfulness that he had to the work of God.

And in the morning, after the first hour, when he sat at reading, he became as an enslaved man and at each head he read he fell for many times on his face and at many verses he raised his hands towards the sky and he extolled God.

He was forty years old. He ate very little food and very dry food. And because he forced his body over-measure and over-power, he looked like shadow, so that I had mercy on the thinness of his face; because of the much non-eating he exhausted on himself and his face was not even two fingers in measure. I told him often: "Have mercy on yourself, brother, in your asceticism and in this good living which you have gained, in

order you not to disturb and not to interrupt this living, which have become to you as a spiritual chain. Do not lose on yourself for the desire of a small adding and so to be stopped in your way from walking the whole road. Eat with temperance, in order you not to reach to always eat, and do not stretch your leg overmeasure, in order you not to totally stop”.

And that brother was merciful and very shy, and he was giving alms with a happy face; he was clean in his nature, always ready to comfort another, wise according to God, and beloved by everybody for his cleanness and gladness. He was working together with the brothers when they needed him, often even for three or for four days, and he returned to his monastic cell on each evening. This was because he was skillful to any serving. And when he didn't have something, though he needed that, due to his much shame for the small and for the big ones, he was unable to say that he didn't have that thing. And most often, when he was working together with the brothers, he did that because he felt shame not to do it, because otherwise he hated leaving his monastic cell. It was so the living of this brother. And od our God to be the glory forever! Amen.

## **Word LXXVI**

### **About an Old Man**

On other occasion I went again to an old man who was good and virtuous, and who loved me much. He was simple at word, but he was enlightened with his knowledge and deep with his heart and he was speaking the things bestowed him by grace. He didn't leave his monastic cell often, but only to attend the holy religious services (synaxes). He was taking heed at himself and he was occupying on himself with the appeasement.

I told him once: “Father, a thought has come to me to sit on Sundays on the churches porch and to eat there in the morning, so that anyone who enters and who gets out, by seeing me, to defame me”, and the old man answered me this: “It was written that anyone who causes offense to those from the world he won't see the light. You are not known by anybody



in this place, neither they know your life, but they will conclude that the monks eat in the morning, especially that here are some beginner brothers and many of them, trusting you and using you, they will be harmed by seeing you doing that. The old fathers did things similar to this because of the many wonders they worked and for the honor they had and for their great fame. They did those things in order to dishonor on themselves and to hide the glory of their living and to remove from themselves the causes of their pride. But what forces you to do that? Don't you know that each way of living has its rule and its time? But such a living it hasn't been appointed to you, neither such a fame. Because you are living like one of the brothers and you don't even benefit of that, but you can harm another. Then, such a work is not useful to anybody, but only to them who are consummate and great. This is because such a living means a loosening of the senses<sup>570</sup>. But to them who are in the middle and to the beginner that is harmful. This is because they need much guarding and they need to keep their senses into submission. But the old men crossed through the time of the guarding so that they gain out of anything they want. The merchants who are inexperienced in the great deals, they cause to themselves many losses; but they advance quickly in the small businesses. And again, as I said, in everything there is a rule and every kind of living has its own time possible to be known. But everyone who starts before time things which are above his measure, he will double down his harm and he won't gain anything. If you desire the gain, you must endure joyfully the dishonor coming to you without your will, on a good purpose, and do not allow on yourself to get disturbed, neither to hate him who dishonor you".

I once had a discussion with that saint who tasted out of the tree of life, through his soully ardor, since the dawn of his youth and to the evening of his old age. And after he taught me many things about virtue, he told me this: "All the prayer which the body is not toiling in, and which the heart is not troubles in, it is reckoned as an aborted child. This is because such a prayer is without soul"<sup>571</sup>. And he told me again: "Do not engage

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<sup>570</sup> That means to loosen up the senses. But this can be afforded only by them who, through habituation, they have reached that state which their senses no longer tempt them.

<sup>571</sup> This idea will appear at Saint Gregory Palamas too, against Barlaam, who argued, in the mechanistic spirit of the Occident, that the prayer is some sort of philosophical meditation that must not be hindered by any tiredness. One must pray while sitting comfortably on a chair,

on yourself, neither take part to, by any means, in any discussion with the quarrelling man or with him who wants to impose his word, or with him who is cunning in thought and shameless in his senses, in order not to be removed from you your cleanness achieved by you with so much tiredness and thus your heart to be filled up with darkness and disturbance”.

## **Word LXXVII**

### **About another Old Man**

I went once to the monastic cell of one of the old men. He was a saint who didn't open the door often to somebody. When he saw me through that small window of his monastic cell and he recognized me, he told me: “Do you want to come in?”. I answered him: “I do, honored father”. After I got in and after we prayed and after we spoke for a long time, I finally asked him: “What have I done, father, because some people come to me and I neither gain anything nor I use anything by meeting them? But I feel shame to tell them not to come. They often impede me from doing my usual program of prayer. And this troubles me”. The old man answered me to that:

“When some people like these come to you because they love the idleness, after they sit for a little while, you will pretend that you want to stand at prayer, so that you will tell him who visits you, by bowing down before him: Brother, let's pray, for the time for my prayer program has come and I cannot overlook it. This is because I find it difficult to fulfill it at another time, and that becomes to me a cause for disturbance. And without being forced by a stringent need I cannot let it go. And not there is nothing to force me not to pray! And do not allow that brother not to pray together with you. And if that one says: You pray for a little while and then I will pray either, bow down before him and tell him: Make, for love, at least this sole prayer with me, in order I to benefit of your prayer. And when you stand up, you will prolong your prayer even over what you usually do. If you

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and not by feeling the pain of his knees or crying for his sins. But only this gives soul, or warmth, or existential vibration to the prayer.

do so when they come to visit you, they will know that you do not think as they do, neither you love the idleness, and wherever they will find out that you are, they won't come close to you.

Take heed, therefore, lest by receiving a man in your monastic cell, you to leave the thing of God. And if there comes some of the old men, or some stranger, sitting together with them will be counted to you instead of the greatest prayer. But if the stranger is among those who love the vain-speaking, you resting him (give him to eat), according to your possibilities, and then release him to go in peace".

One of the fathers said: "I wonder about the fact that I hear that some brothers, by doing manual labor in their monastic cells, and they still are able to accomplish their prayer program without missing anything and without getting disturbed". And he told this wonderful word: "Verily I say myself, that if I go to fetch water, I get disturbed into my habit and into my order and I am impeded from the consummate work of my mind".

## **Word LXXVIII**

### **About the Questions Asked by a Certain Brother**

The same old man was once asked by a certain brother: "What should I do because often I have a necessary thing, either for my weakness or for my work, either for some other reason, and I cannot live peacefully without that thing, but by seeing somebody needing the same thing and by being I defeated by mercy, I give him that thing. But I often do this because somebody asks me for that thing, because I am forced by love and by commandment and I bestow away what I need. And after that, the need for that thing pushed me into worry and into the disturbance of my thoughts, and because of that my mind gets scattered and leaves its care for appeasement; and maybe I am forced to leave my quietude to go and search for that thing. And if I endure and I do not go out, I will reach in a great trouble and into the disturbance of my thoughts. So, I do not know which to choose out of these two: that what ends and it scatters

my mind for satisfying my brother, or to overlook his ask and I to persevere into quietude?”.

The old man answered: “Any giving of alms, or love, or mercy, or anything that is reckoned as for God, but it impeded you from quietude and it steals your eye towards the world and it pushes you into some worry and it disturbs you from remembering God and it interrupts your prayers and it stopes you from cogitating at the godlike readings (that is the weapon defending you against scatterings) and it scatters your guarding and it makes walking around after you committed yourself and it makes you to get out and spend time with others after you got lonely, and it uprises against you your buried passions and it unties your restrained senses and it abolished you death towards the world and it lower you down from the angelic work (that has a sole care)<sup>572</sup> and it places you in the group of the laymen - that is a righteousness that must perish. This is because fulfilling the duty of love by satisfying the bodily needs it is a thing of the laymen, or also of the less-advanced monks as well, and not to those who live in quietude or even to those who have their quietude mixed with the union into a thought with others and to them who ceaselessly enter and go out. It is good to and worthy to be praised at some people like these.

But to them who have truly chosen the exit from the world with the body and with their soul, in order they to nail their cogitation into the lonely prayer, into the death towards the perishing things and towards the seeing and the memory of the things, they due not to serve the body work and the righteousness tied to the visible things (in order they to justify Christ through them) but, according to eth word of the Apostle, by “killing their limbs from on earth” (Col. 3: 5) they to bring to God a clean and unblemished sacrifice of their thoughts, as first-fruits of their ploughing, and the killing of their bodies into enduring the dangers for the hope of the future realities. This is for the monastic living competes that of the angels. It is inappropriate to us to leave the heavenly ploughing and to attach ourselves to material things”. And to out God be the glory forever! Amen.

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<sup>572</sup> The angelic work if the ceaseless thinking at God.

## **Word LXXIX**

### **About the Rebuking of a Certain Brother**

A certain brother, by being once rebuked because of not giving alms, he answered daringly and naughtily him who rebuked him, that the monks do not have the duty of giving alms. And he who rebuked him answered him: "It is known and it is obvious that the monk is not submitted to the duty of giving alms. The monk is that one who can tell with his unveiled face to Christ as it was written: "Behold we left everything and followed You" (Mt. 19: 27); namely the monk has nothing on earth and he doesn't entangle on himself into the bodily things and he has nothing in his mind out of the seen things, by receiving only the things necessary to his basis needs, and by not occupying on himself with what exceed that, but he is like a bird in its nest. The monk is not submitted to the duty of giving alms. Because how could he give to another what he doesn't have? Rather him who occupied on himself with the worldly things and who works with his hands and who received from others, he owes to give alms to the monk. But disregarding that it is a merciless opposition to the Lord's commandment. This is because if somebody doesn't get close to God into the hidden things, neither he knows who to serve Him into body, neither he takes care of the seen things which he can do, what other hoe will have someone like this which him to achieve the life for himself through? One like this is unwise".

Another old man said: "I wonder why they trouble on themselves in working the appeasement, in order to fulfill others' needs". And he said again: "We mustn't mix into working the appeasement the care for something. Let each thing be honored in its place, in order our living not to be mixed. This is for him who worries about many things, he will be the slave of many of those things. And he who has left everything and who takes care about the state of his soul, he is the friend of God. Take in account that there are many in the world who give alms and who accomplish the duty of the love for them who are close in the bodily things. But workers of the full and good quietude, who live into God, barely can be found and only very few. But who among those who give alms and who do justice in the bodily things, could reach any of the gifts of them who have been found worthy from God to live in quietude?".

And he said again: "If you are layman, you occupy on yourself with the good things which you can do within world; and if you are a monk, you occupy on yourself with the things which adorn the good monks. And if you want to occupy on yourself with both of those, you will fall of both of them. The things of the monk are these ones: the freedom from the bodily things, the bodily tiredness into prayers, the ceaseless remembrance of God within heart. So, if it is possible to you to be you satiated, without these ones, with the worldly virtues, you judge it".

**Question:** "So, the monk who toils with the appeasement cannot achieve both these things: to occupy on himself with the care for God and to bear the other care within his heart?"

**Answer:** "I do not reckon that he who wants to live in quietude, not even when he will leave everything and he will take care only of his soul, not even then he will be able to live in fully working the appeasement, even if he is outside any worry. All the less will he take care of something else. The Lord has left within world them who serve Him and who take care of His children and He has chosen them who liturgize in front of Him. This is for not only in the things of the earthly emperors one can see diverse levels, namely those which always stay in front of the emperor and are shared with the emperor's mysteries and which are more extolled than the things which are farer to the emperor, but one can see that also in the realities of the heavenly Emperor. This is for how much daring have achieved they who always live together with Him in a mysterious dialogue through prayer, and of how much heavenly and earthly joy are they found worthy of, and how great power have they towards the whole creation, in comparison to them who serve God through their wealth and things of the life and who give Him thanks through their good deeds, despite this thing too is a very great and goof thing! So, it is appropriate to us to take example not from these ones, but from those who have left the things of the life and who have rejected the bodily things and who have stretched their hearts towards the gates of the heavens.

What were well-pleasant to God the old saints in, who travelled the way of this living previously to us? Was Saint John of Thebe - the treasury of the virtues, the spring of the prophecy - pleasant to God by resting the brothers inside his lock up monastic cell, or by prayer and quietude? I do not deny that, by resting their brothers too, many were well-pleasant to God; but

they were less than they who did that by prayer and by forsaking everything. It is obvious that we receive help from them who live in quietude and who are honored by the brothers, either they help us with the word in time of need, or they pray for us. But besides these, the memory or the care for a certain thing among the things of the life, it doesn't belong to the spiritual wisdom. This is for "Give Caesar what belong to Caesar, and give God what belongs to God" (Mt. 22: 21) and give to the neighbor and to God the things which belong to each of them, it hasn't been told to them who live in quietude, but to them who live outside. This is because of not being commanded to them who live in the angelic rule, namely in taking care of their soul, to become pleasant to God through the things of the life, namely they to take care of the work of the hands, or to take from somebody in order to give to somebody else. So, it is not appropriate to the monk to take care of something that move his mind or that lowers his mind away from staying in front of God.

And if somebody, by denying these things, he mentions Paul the Apostle, that that one worked with his hands and he gave alms, we will tell him that only Paul was able to do both things. And we do not know another Paul like Apostle Paul. Show me another Paul like that and I will believe you<sup>573</sup>.

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<sup>573</sup> "The fact that his thing was greater and higher and more difficult to fulfill, it is obvious to everyone. For he had the care of all the Churches and he was continuously and ceaselessly advising. ("For three years I haven't ceases, day and night, to advice, with tears, on everybody" – Acts 20: 31). He endured travels, shipwrecks, persecutions, beatings with the stick, chains, prisons, and other heavy sufferings. Then, he didn't eat bread received as gift (2 Thes. 3: 8) but he worked for himself and for his people with his hands (Acts 20: 32). That's why also the godlike Chrysostom praises Paul in many of his speeches, especially in his *Encomium*, saying: "What the man is and how big is the nobility of our nature and how much virtue this creature is capable of, it was shown, more than all people, by Paul. But he is not impossible to imitate because of that. This is for himself says about himself: "[I beg you, follow me" (Col. 4: 17; Eph. 5: 1). So, not only Paul could do everything. This is for Who was Paul able to do everything into? Into Him Who defended Paul, into Christ. "This is for, he says, I can do all the things into Him Who strengthens me up, into Christ" (Phil. 4: 13). And Christ Himself said: "All the things are possible to him who believes" (Mk. 9: 23). But Abba Isaac said in another place (p. 306 Greek text): "The more the man is elevated, the more the man will enter the spiritual level, in the likeness of Paul". So, either Isaac himself, or the old man mentioned above and who said that "only Paul could do all the things", they used a hyperbole, wanting to show the height of the virtue of the Apostle and the bigness of the difficulty of the appeasement, when it is added to it the care for giving alms and from providing the neighbor with the needed things".

So, you cannot bring the things committed out of oikonomia as proof for the usual things. This is for something else I the work of the Gospel and something else is the work of the quietude. And if you want to keep the quietude, you must become like the Cherubs who do not take care of anything of the earthly life. And you must not reckon that there is somebody else on earth except you and God Who you care if at, as you have been taught by the fathers who lived before you. This is for if somebody doesn't make his heart harsh and if he doesn't strongly master his mercy, in order to keep himself far from the care for the things from below, even if it would seem him that he has that care for God<sup>574</sup> and for something of life, and if he doesn't persevere only into prayer at the times appointed for prayer, we won't be liberated from disturbance and from worry and he won't be able to remain into quietude.

This is because when the thought comes to you to take care of something for the sake of the virtue, in order that peace had by you within your heart to be scattered away from you, you will tell to that thought: "Good is the way of the love for the will of God, but for God as well I do not want that".

"Stand by me, Father, said a monk, I am running after you for God". And that one answered him: "I am running away from you for God too". Abba Arsenius didn't meet anybody, for God, neither for teaching nor for something else. Another spoke for God all day and he welcomed all the strangers coming to see him. That one chose, instead of this, the silence and the quietude. And that's why he was speaking to the godlike Ghost amid the sea of the passing live and he sailed peacefully in the ship of the quietude, as it was plainly shown to the ascetics who knew that from God.

And if you are full of disturbance while trying to live in quietude, and if you disturb your body with the work of your hands and if you disturb your soul by worrying of many things, what quietude will you have, by taking care of many things, so that you to be pleasant to God? Judge that by yourself! This is because without forsaking all the things and without getting far from all worries, it is a reproachable thing us to say that one can achieve the living of the quietude. And to our God be the glory!

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<sup>574</sup> It is about a care for the things of the life of others, had by somebody because of thinking that thus he fulfills the will of God.



## **Word LXXX**

### **About the Most Necessary and Very Greatly Beneficial Thing Due to be Remembered Daily by Him Who Sits into His Monastic Cell and Who Has Decided to Take Heed at Himself**

A certain brother wrote these things and he placed them ceaselessly in front of himself, in order him to constantly remember those: "You have spent your life into insanity, you covered in shame and worthy of all evil man! But you guard on yourself at least on this day that remained to you out of your days spent in vain and without working the good things and enriched into evilness! Do not ask about world, neither about the world's life, nor about monks or about their things, neither as there are, nor about the bigness of their work, neither you take care of any of these! You have mysteriously exited the world and you have been reckoned as dead into Christ. You won't ever live within world, either to them who are in the world, in order the resting to come in your way and you to become alive into Christ! Be prepared for any condemnation and for any reproach and mocking and defamation from everybody! And you must receive all of these with joy, as being truly worthy of all of them, and you must endure with thanks the whole pain and all the troubles and the dangers coming from the devils, as one who have accomplished the devils' will. Endure manly all troubles and the things happening naturally to you and all the bitterness! Endure those with hope in God and the lack of the things necessary to the body, which will be, after a little while, all of them garbage! And welcome all of these with trust in God, and do not expect to be saved from somewhere else, nor you must expect comforting from somebody else! And you must throw your worry upon the Lord and in all your trials you must condemn on yourself as guilty for all of them! Do not get offended by somebody, neither blame them who upset you! This is for you have eaten from the forbidden tree and you have gained all sort of passions. Receive joyfully the bitterness, in order that to shake you up a little, and then you will get sweetened! Woe to you and to your stinking vain-glory, because you have left your soul non-condemned, despite your soul being full of all sorts of sins, and

you have condemned other with your word and with your thought! Enough with all this pig food which you have eating until now! What do you have in common with the people, you who are so dirty? Aren't you ashamed of living among people, after you have lived recklessly?

If you take heed at all of these and if you master on yourself in everything, maybe you will be saved by the help of God, and if not, you will leave for that dark place and for the dwelling places of the devils whose will you have been working with a shameless face. Lo, I have testified to you about all of these. If God starts coming justly against you, in order God to reward you for the defamations and for the curses you have been cogitating and uttering against Him, the whole world will forsake you. Therefore, you must stop right now and you must start enduring the rewards coming upon you”.

The brother was remembering of all of these in all his days, for, if a temptation or a trouble came, he would have been able to endure them with gratitude and he would have benefited of those. May us too to endure with gratitude the things coming upon us and may us benefit by the grace of the loving-of-people God Who it is due the glory and the mastery forever! Amen.

## **Word LXXXI**

### **About the Discerning among Virtues and about the Traveling of the Whole Road**

Travelling the whole road consists of these three: of repentance, or cleanness, and of consummation.

What the repentance is? It stands for forsaking the previous things and of being sad for having done them.

And what the cleanness is, briefly speaking? It stands for the heart full of mercy for the whole created nature<sup>575</sup>.

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<sup>575</sup> It is a positive definition of the cleanness. The cleanness is not something in itself, but it is a love for all the creatures. It is the contrary of any egotism. So, the dirt is one with the egotism, with the preoccupation with the self. Only the heart sees God in all realities for it sees all the realities in their deep and transparent truth.

And what the consummation is? It stands for the deep of the humbleness that means forsaking all realities both seen and unseen<sup>576</sup>. By the seen realities I mean all the felt realities, and by unseen realities I mean the thought (intelligible) realities. Then you will be outside the worry for them.

The old man was asked again, at another time: "What the repentance is?". And he said: "The crushed and humble heart; the twofold willing death towards all realities". "And what the full of mercy heart is?". And he said: "The burning of the heart for the whole creation, for people, for birds, for animals, for devils<sup>577</sup>, and for all the creatures. In this case, the thought at these ones, and seeing them, they make flowing out of eyes torrents of tears. Out of the much and burdening mercy that masters the heart, and out of perseverance, the heart will get diminished and it will no longer be able to endure or to hear or to see any harm, or any regardless how small sadness, occurred in some creature<sup>578</sup>. And for this it brings prayer with tears on

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<sup>576</sup> The consummation doesn't mean gathering all of them but it means emptying oneself of all realities. It means feeling your own void, it is that feeling that you have nothing, neither something seen, nor any understanding, neither some soul capacity. In this endless void, or under its image, it makes Himself "felt" – above feeling and thinking – the endless God.

<sup>577</sup> The mercy is the "burning of the heart" and not a lukewarm sentiment; it is something the mother's feeling for her ill or suffering child. This is, in the same time, the cleanness. So, it is not a state of passiveness. But it is an intense living of the love full of suffering for the suffering one. It is a burning even for devils. It is the conscience that they too suffer because of their evilness. How can be this reconciled with the happiness of those who will be into the eternal happiness? That is a great mystery. Even into the suffering for others there is a consummation, a lack of egotism and of sin and of narrowing. And something else means suffering for others, but being yourself clean (for only than you can suffer for others), and something else is being tormented by your hatred against others, by the passions dominating you. The spring of this suffering for others is in the cross of Christ.

<sup>578</sup> "The heart gets diminished and it will no longer be able to endure any harm in any creature": the heart no longer has the power for enduring the sight of others' suffering. But right this means the heart's supreme suffering. On the other hand, the heart feels that it is unable to suffer as it should suffer. The heart's suffering should be infinite. But one experiences the infinity in the helplessness of living the infinity. This means experiencing the infinity dome by creature: on one hand the suffering is infinite, on the other hand the creature lives it infinity but in the helplessness of comprising, expressing, and communicating the infinite suffering. This is also the infinity of the creature's love: the creature always tries to communicate it, and, because of not being able to do that, the creature always repeats this communication, better said it communicated it in diverse modes, in other sides of it. In this it is implied the necessity of the love's eternity and of the ones who loves, namely of the person. My endless thirst to live and for being loves, it shows that together with the beloved one we are both destined to eternity. And for this love which we inherit successively, it could not have a beginning, there must be a communication among Persons Who love on one another from ever.

every moment also for the speechless creatures and for the enemies of the truth and for those who harm him, in order those to be guarded and forgiven<sup>579</sup>; likewise, for the nature of the creatures which crawl on the ground. He does that out of the much mercifulness that moves his heart without measure, in the likeness of God”.

And he was asked also: “What the prayer is?”. And he said: “An appeasement and an emptying of the cogitation of all the realities from here and a heart that consummately turns its sight towards the full of longing hope for the future realities. And he who is separated from these he sows mixed seed in his field, like him who yokes up together the ox and the donkey”<sup>580</sup>.

And he was asked again: “How can somebody achieve the humbleness?”. And he said: “Through the ceaseless remembrance of his mistakes and through the conscience of getting closer to his death, by wearing poor clothes, by choosing his final resting place on each moment, and by running to the most defaming and reproachable deeds in anything; by always being obedient, by ceaseless silence, by not loving the meetings in gatherings and by the will of being unknown and overlooked; by not keeping a own rule, by hating the much-speaking with many persons, and by not loving the earnings. And after these, by despising in his mind of any reproach of blame from any person, and of any envy’ by not having his hand upon anyone and by not having anyone’s hand upon himself, but by being alone in his own things<sup>581</sup>, and of not taking in the world, upon himself, the care for somebody<sup>582</sup>, except for himself. And, on short, one reaches the humbleness by estrangement, by poverty, and by living alone. These ones give birth to the humbleness that cleans the heart up”.

And the sign of those who have reached the consummation is this: even if they are surrendered for ten times a day, to being they burnt for the people, due to their love for people they won’t get enough of people. Like Moses said to God:

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<sup>579</sup> They would be granted if they repented. But the devils do not repent; and likewise do many of the people who allow themselves to be tempted by devils.

<sup>580</sup> I think that here is about him who appeases on himself of the worldly worries but he doesn’t have his heart full of hope for the future realities.

<sup>581</sup> Not mastering upon somebody and not using the fact of being the trustee of somebody, but by trusting only to God, by staying alone in front of God, with his sins.

<sup>582</sup> Do not reckon on himself as able to save somebody, but reckoning that he cannot even save on himself.

“If you forgive their sin, forgive it. And if not, erase me too from the book that You have written me in” (Exod. 32: 31). And as the blessed Paul said: “I would pray for I to be anathema from Christ for my brothers” and the other things (Rom. 9: 3). And again: “Now I am rejoicing of troubles for you who are from the Gentiles” (Col. 1: 24). But also, the other apostles received their death in all ways, in exchange for people’s life.

And as end of all of these, God and the Lord gave for His love His Son Himself to death on the cross<sup>583</sup>. “For God loved the world so much that He gave even His Only Begotten Son to death for the world” (Jn. 3: 16). That was not because God couldn’t deliver us in another way, but He wanted to teach us by that that useful love<sup>584</sup>. And God brought us closer to Him in the death of His Only Begotten Son<sup>585</sup>. And if God had had something more precious than His Son, he would have given that too to us, in order our mankind to be within Him. And for His great love He didn’t want to force our freedom, though He could do that, but He wanted to bring us closer to Him through the love of our thought<sup>586</sup>. And Christ Himself obeyed His Father for His love for us, in order Him to receive upon Himself the reproach and the grief, with joy, as the Scripture says: “Instead of the joy that he had, he endured the cross, despising the shame” (Hebr. 12: 2). That’s why the Lord said on that night which He was betrayed: “This is My body, which is being given for the world, towards life; and this is My blood that is shed for many for the forgiveness of the sins” (Mt. 26: 26-28). And for us He says again: “I am sanctifying Me” (Jn. 17: 19).

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<sup>583</sup> We have here again an anti-Nestorian text. Himself the Son of God died on the cross as man and not as a man differing from God.

<sup>584</sup> So, not for a juridical satisfaction, in the Western sense.

<sup>585</sup> Even in the death of His Son God has brought us closer to Himself. This is for He came within His death with His supreme love to us too, and He penetrated us with it, by resurrecting Him and by resurrecting us, so that ourselves too to love Him, by forgetting us about ourselves and by being us elevated into Him. The consummation consists of love, and the love is tied to sacrifice. In that love brought all the way to sacrifice, or in each of those, there is a self-forgetfulness and the union with the beloved one and, by that, the filling up with love. In the death of His Son there was our mankind itself, in the state of surrender towards God and the Father. Saint Isaac says this in the next sentence. It is thus affirmed the ontological-transformative and recapitulative sense of the cross, namely the cross’s renewing sense and its power of embracing all the people in order this renewal to be achieved.

<sup>586</sup> He didn’t want to make us good by force, but He wanted to gain us into Christ His Son by our free love for Him, as for our Father.

All the saints reach so this consummation when the reach to be consummate and the liken themselves to God in the abundant springing of their love for all the people. And to this sign of the likeness to God tend all the saints: towards the consummation in love for their neighbor. So did our fathers from loneliness; when they reached that consummation and likeness, they always received within them the full life of Lord Jesus Christ.

About the blessed Anthony they say that he never thought in himself to do something more beneficial to him than to his neighbor. He had this conviction that the gain of his neighbor is the best work for himself.

About Abba Agathon it was again said that he said: "I wanted to find a leper to give my body him and I to take his body". Can you see the consummate love? Even when he was outside of himself, he didn't allow not to rest (feed) his neighbor. And he has a hoe and a brother entered his monastic cell and that brother wanted that hoe and the saint didn't let that brother go without taking that hoe with him. And many other things have been written by some people like these.

And why am I telling only these things? Many of them gave their bodies to the wild beasts, and to the sword, and to the fire, for their neighbor. Nobody will be able to ascend on the level of this love without hiddenly feeling his trust<sup>587</sup>. And they who love this world they won't be able to achieve the love for people. When somebody achieves the love for God Himself, he immediately dresses himself up with that love. But it is necessary that him who have achieved God not to desire to achieve something else too together with God, but he must reject even his body<sup>588</sup>. This is for, if he puts on this world and if he wants this life, he won't be dressed up in God until he forsakes these. This is for God Himself confessed that by saying: "If somebody doesn't leave everything and if he doesn't hate his soul, he won't be able to become My disciple" (Lk. 14: 26). So, one must not only forsake those, but he must even hate them.

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<sup>587</sup> The trust in or the entrustment of the future life.

<sup>588</sup> Here is being done a strict difference between the love for man into God and the attachment to the things of this world, or even to our body. The love for man is spiritual, it embraces the man's deep and inexhaustible subject, destined to eternity. The love for things or for bodies sticks with something that is limited and passing and it give the body a pleasure that satisfies only momentarily - or for a number of successive moments but still perishable - the senses.

And if he cannot become His disciple, how will him dwell within Him?

**Question:** Why is the hope so sweet to the saints and also the living accompanied by it and its deeds are easy to the soul? And why are they gained so quickly?

**Answer:** This is for within their soul has been wakened up the natural desire and it waters them up out of this cup<sup>589</sup> and it makes them drunk starting from that moment. And due to that they no longer feel the tiredness, neither the troubles, and all along the road of their trip they reckon on themselves as they would travel through the air and not walking on the earth, for they no longer see the harshness of the road and they no longer encounter mountains and rivers and “those harsh way become smooth to them” (Isa. 40: 4). And for on each moment, they look at the bosom of their Father and this hope shows them like a finger, on each moment, the things from far and unseen. This is for they see those things like in an icon<sup>590</sup>, with the sharp eye of the faith, and for the parts of the soul are lit up like by a fire, by the longing for the realities which are far, and the realities which are not present are reckoned as being present. This is for the length of their thoughts reaches there<sup>591</sup>. And they always force on themselves to reach there.

And only when he gets closer to any virtue in order him to work that virtue, he won't work that virtue only, partially, but he will work comprisingly all the virtues, entirely, and concomitantly. This is for they do not make their trip on the imperial way, as all the people do, but these giants chose for the shortest ways<sup>592</sup>. And they are proved to travel in a short time

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<sup>589</sup> They get drunk out of the cup of the future hope, as of some kind of foretasting of its goods. And the hope for the future life is natural to the soul.

<sup>590</sup> For the soul is an image of God, better said the soul is a holy icon of Him Who is holy and unseen and endless, right through this indefinite of their soul, through their soul's endless novelty and thirst for love, they see God Who alone can answer the soul's endless thirst for love and for knowledge.

<sup>591</sup> The soul's thirst for love and for endless knowledge is full of fire. It is not cold. And the thoughts at Him Who can satisfy it reach to Him, are tied to Him, though, on the other hand, through His infiniteness accomplished from ever, He is so different from the soul.

<sup>592</sup> The “imperial way” is a moderate, long, and slow way. But these ones take giant steps and they swallow short distances in a short time. They put in the working of each virtue the whole their soul, the whole their thirst for consummation. That's why they embrace all the virtues in a sole virtue.

the road to the dwelling places<sup>593</sup>. This is for this hope burns them like a fire and their joy cannot be quenched by the harshness of their road<sup>594</sup>. And it happens to them, as the blessing Jeremiah said too: “For I said: I will no longer call the name of the Lord, neither will I speak in His name. For my heart has become like a fire that burns me and it penetrates my bones” (Jer. 20: 9). It so occurs and works the remembrance of God within the hearts of them who get drunk with the hope in His promises<sup>595</sup>.

The short paths of the virtues are the comprising virtues, for there is not a long distance among the many paths between a way of living or another<sup>596</sup>; there isn’t even place and time and scattering between one and another, but they stay together and all of them are accomplished quickly.

**Question:** What the human dispassion is?

**Answer:** The dispassion doesn’t consist of not feeling the passions, but in not accepting them, due to the many and diverse virtues, shown and hidden, achieved by some of them who have weakened the passions within themselves, so that the passions cannot easily uprise against the soul. And the cogitation doesn’t need to constantly take heed at the passions because all the time the cogitation is full of the meanings coming into mind out of thinking and of occupying with the ways of the good living that is moving within mind. That’s why, when the passions start moving, the cogitation is suddenly kidnapped from the closeness to passions by some meaning

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<sup>593</sup> The “dwelling places”, those which our Savior Christ told about that are in the house of His Father (Jn. 14: 2), are the virtues achieved by them who strive to, as the fathers say. This is for any virtue, for instance the humbleness, the patience, the love, it is like a true vestment, or a dwelling place, that dresses up him who has it. Thus, the virtues are both paths towards the dwelling places of the consummation and the dwelling places of the images of the consummation.

<sup>594</sup> The “harshness” and the “joy” of the trip express another paradox really lived by them who live in asceticism. The use of the paradox is another trait relating Isaac the Syrian to John Climacus.

<sup>595</sup> Even only the remembrance of the name God ignites the fire within heart, by bringing into thought the whole love for Him. That’s why Prophet Jeremiah no longer wanted to call God’s name because of not being him able to endure that burning.

<sup>596</sup> The comprising or general virtues (the wisdom, the temperance, the righteousness, and the manhood), by comprising within them many virtues, and each of them by increasing, it makes to increase all the partial virtues comprised within them. That’s why, he who practices the general virtues, he practices many virtues in the same time, and therefore his road to consummation will be shorter. He quickly ascends from a level of living to a higher one.



that occurs within mind<sup>597</sup>. And the passions remain unworking, as the Blessed Mark said.

The mind of them who fulfill, by the grace of God, the deeds of the virtues, and who has come closer to knowledge<sup>598</sup>, it no longer feels, except for a little, that evil and non-understanding part of the soul. This is for their knowledge is kidnapped into height and that fact estranges their knowledge from all the realities of the world. And for their innocence, and for the subtlety, nimbleness, and sharpness of their mind, but also for the continuation of their asceticism, their mind will be cleaned and it will become transparent, due to the fact that their body has become dry<sup>599</sup>. And through the occupation with the quietude and by long persevering in it, the mind easily and quickly takes under control each passion<sup>600</sup>. And that contemplation from within them it guides them towards the state of kidnapping (awe) tied to it. And by this they are much enriched into views (contemplations) and their cogitation never is lacking the content of the understanding, neither they even live outside the realities sown within them by the fruit of the Holy Ghost. And by getting accustomed in years, there will be removed from their heart the memories which move the passions within their soul, and it will be removed the mastery of the devil too. When the soul doesn't make friends with the passions by thinking at them, for the fact that the soul is ceaselessly dominated by another care, the strength of the

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<sup>597</sup> It is to be noticed the power had by a higher and clean meaning against the passions' force. There truly is a godlike power into the superiority of the sweetness of that higher meaning in comparison to the passing and gross sweetness of the passion. That's why there is godlike power also into the word of him who brings into somebody's mind such a higher meaning. It is a word brought out of the urge, out of the "word" of God.

<sup>598</sup> Through virtues the man gets close to his own true knowledge, of the people and of God. This is for in virtues, there is an attentive look at each of these ones, accompanied by experiencing them. It is a knowledge through practicing the healthy living. It is a knowledge gained through the fact that the man has been seriously testing on himself in big things, in order to surpass on himself, and the man has accomplished on himself on that plan of touching with God and of communion with his fellow humans.

<sup>599</sup> The knowledge of the higher realities is conditioned by the deeds of the virtues. The mind gets more subtle through virtues, for the body itself has been thinned, by being retrained – by practicing the virtues, and the body no longer impedes, with its thickness, the sight of the mind. The knowledge into the souly and spiritual realities it is not the result of some purely theoretical undertaking, which the whole person wouldn't be engaged into, but only the rationality.

<sup>600</sup> "Ἐπιτίθεται ἐκάστω" could also mean that: it penetrates each thing, namely it sees that thing's meaning into God.

claws of the passions cannot take under mastery his spiritual feelings<sup>601</sup>.

**Question:** Which are the most exquisite traits of the humbleness?

**Answer:** As the self-appreciation (the pride) is a scattering of the soul in the hallucinations which steal the soul from himself and which do not restrain the soul from flying in the clouds of his thoughts, which he goes around the whole creation with<sup>602</sup>, so the humbleness gathers the soul into appeasement and the soul is gathered by humbleness within himself. And as the soul isn't known neither seen by bodily eyes, likewise he who is humble in thought he is not known among people. And as his soul is hidden within his body from the sight and from the mixing with all the people, likewise, he who is humble he doesn't want to be seen and known by people, for his separation and for his depravation of all things, but his will is also this: if possible, he wants to sink even on himself within himself and him to dwell and him to enter the quietude and him to totally forsake his previous thoughts, together with all his senses, and him to be like one who is not within creation and who hasn't come to existence and who is not known at all even to his own soul<sup>603</sup>. And as hidden and closed is this one, as a treasure, and separated from the world, the closer is whole to his Master<sup>604</sup>.

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<sup>601</sup> Rarely one can find in other spiritual writings such a detailed description of the mode which the dispassion - or the weakening of the passions - can be gained in. This state is achieved not by directly fighting against the passions, but by giving a positive content to the soul, a content that is opposite to passions.

<sup>602</sup> "Μετεωρισμός", which I have almost always translated as *scattering*, it is a movement of the soul into the sky, like the meteors do. The soul wanders with its thought through the sky, without a settlement, by roving with his preoccupation for all the things, through all the imaginings, without having the steadfastness to deepen something from the whole objective reality, and especially without deepening into himself and into setting his own life in order. So, the humbleness is defined here as gathering of the soul into himself, without claiming that he knows everything, and actually not knowing anything as he should. The humbleness is the opposite to the arrogant superficiality.

<sup>603</sup> He forgets even about himself. He has exceeded the self-knowledge. The conscience about himself has sunk into his own being that is deeper than it, better said it has sunk into God Who is its endless foundation. So, it is not a forgetfulness about oneself in the superficial aspects, which brings all sorts of irresponsible deeds, but it is a forgetfulness about oneself into deep, a deep that keeps the mind therein.

<sup>604</sup> He no longer knows except on God, like one who loves somebody no longer knows except that somebody. It is the most complete definition of the humbleness: to exist as you would not exist, not to be known even to yourself, but still not to be like an animal or as an unconscious plant. Be conscious about God, but not about yourself. Do not make a big deal of you. If in

He who is humble in thought he never finds the resting in order to pill up and to mix multitudes, moves, and voices, looseness and worries and banquets - out of which it is born the unrestraint -, neither in words and in meetings and in discussions and in the scattering of his senses; but he cherishes more than all of these to live lonely into quietude, separated from all creation, and taking care of himself in a peaceful place<sup>605</sup>.

And he chooses in everything the smallness, the non-earning - that is absolutely necessary -, and the poverty, instead of being among many things and deeds which follow one after another. He wants all the time to find peace and lack-of-worry, without the mixing among the present realities, so that the thoughts not to spring out of himself. This is for he is convinced that if he falls into many things, it will be impossible him to be protected against the disturbance of the thoughts. This is because, where there are many things there will be many worries and disorder and piling up of diverse and mixed thoughts. And then he goes out of the state and he ascends above his earthly worries, and he enters the peace of his thoughts, which he is in when he doesn't think except to the small absolutely necessary needs, and when the cogitation doesn't receive except the sole care for its best thoughts. This is because, if his needs impeded him from the all-good thoughts, he will reach that state which he will be hurt in, and which he will hurt on himself in. And by that he opens the door to the passions and he removes from himself the peace of the discernment (of the right-reckoning), and so the humbleness will run away from him and the door of the peace will be locked up<sup>606</sup>. So, because of all of these, the soul must guard on

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the external realities the man forgets about himself by getting scattered, by getting decomposed and no longer being a unitary subject, by gathering on himself within himself the man finds on himself and he strengthens on himself as such a unitary subject, as a very precious treasure, as a pearl enlightened from beyond himself, by God. This pearl reflects the godlike light and it attracts the attention more upon that godlike light. And the man is amazed in that state not by the pearl represented by himself, but the godlike light beautifying him.

<sup>605</sup> He doesn't forget about himself because of the noise (the "distraction") from outside, but because of diving into himself through appeasement.

<sup>606</sup> The discernment is tied to peace. You cannot distinguish well the evil thoughts into the disorder and the piling up of many worries and passions. When the man takes care of many things, the many thoughts related to those will open the door to the passions and they will shut the door of the peace. Consequently, there are two doors within the soul: a door thought which the inferior passions enter the soul, and a door through which the peace coming from

himself form the many things and the soul must be all the time in quietude and in resting and in peace and in gentleness and in pioussness.

He who is humble he never feels on himself strained, hurried, or troubled. Within him there are no hot or frivolous thoughts. He is all the time in a non-strained resting. Even if the sky collided with the earth, he wouldn't be scared. But not everyone who is peaceful is also humble in cogitation. But everyone who is humble in thought he is peaceful too. He who is not humble in thought he is not gathered within himself<sup>607</sup>; but you will find many people gathered within themselves without being humble in their thought<sup>608</sup>. This is what our gentle and humble Lord said: "Learn from Me for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find resting to your souls" (Mt. 11: 21).

He who is humble in thought he is all the time at rest, for there is nothing to disturb or to scare his cogitation. And one can say – and I reckon it isn't inappropriate to say that – that him who is humble in thought he is not from this world, for he doesn't get scared or changed by sadness and he doesn't get lost or indulge himself in joys either. But the whole his true joy and gladness are into the things of his Lord.

And the humble cogitation is followed by gentleness and by the gathering into oneself. The humble cogitation is shown into the righteousness of the senses, in the measured word, in disregarding on himself, in the poor clothes, in the peaceful walking, in lowing downwards, in the abundance of the mercifulness, in the quickness of his tears, in the lonely soul, in the crushed heart, in the motionlessness of the wrath (anger), in the non-scattered senses, in the fewness of his belongings, in needing little in everything, in enduring, in patience, in not-getting-scared, in the strength of his heart born out of non-loving the temporary life, in enduring the trials, in peaceful and non-frivolous cogitations, in the gathering of the thoughts, in

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above it enters the soul. Or maybe the soul himself enters through one door the passion's world and through another door the soul enters the motherland of the peace.

<sup>607</sup> Only by deepening on himself within himself the man cogitates seriously and he knows the motives which he is being humbled for, and thus he can change his life into good and he can lead his life further onto the way of the good.

<sup>608</sup> Somebody can be focused within himself also by nourishing a thought of avenge, or by planning a tactic to impose himself upon others. That one is far from humble cogitation. But this gathering into himself it is not a gathering into the deepest intimacy of his, but into a passionate thought that is not the same with the deep self of the man, but it is something superficial.

guarding the mysteries of the righteousness<sup>609</sup>, in shame, and in pioussness - and over all of these, into the ceaseless quietude, in ceaselessly remembering the own nescience<sup>610</sup>.

The humble one doesn't ever come across to something that forces him and disturbs him. He who is humble in thought he is ashamed of himself each time he is alone<sup>611</sup>. I wonder how him who is truly humble in thought, when he gets closer to prayer, he won't even dare to beg God for something, or to reckon on himself as worthy of that something that he asks for, and he won't even dare to know what he will be praying for; but he only keeps his silence, with all his thoughts, while only waiting for mercy. He waits to see what decision will be made regarding him by the Worshipped Greatness, and he keeps his face bowed down to earth and his sight stays within his heart focuses on that high and holy gate of the Holies, where is That One Whose dwelling place is the darkness that blinds the eyes of the Seraphs<sup>612</sup>, and whose strength quickens the dance of the Seraphs' groups and it overflows silence over all levels of theirs<sup>613</sup>. And him who is humble in thought he dares to pray for and to say only this: "Your will be done to me, Lord!". Let's say this too within ourselves! Amen.

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<sup>609</sup> The righteousness, or the virginity, it is full of mysteries, it is upheld by a deep thinking, and by feeling the clean and above-nature mystery that penetrates the own nature. The contrary state is joined with the superficiality, or with the superficiality of the own being.

<sup>610</sup> The spiritual life is full of paradoxes. Among those is this one too: on one hand, the humble one truly knows his inner self, while on the other hand he is aware of the indefinite character of his self, namely he is aware of the impossibility to exhaustively know his self. I truly know on myself when I realize that I won't ever be able to fully know on myself, when I realize that I most of myself it remains a mystery to me: "I know that I don't know on myself". The humbleness presses upon the last part of the paradox, for it is much more within you what you do not know than what you do know. What you know is something limited, but it remains unknown to you your own indefinite. The proud one doesn't know except about the first part of this alternative, and that's why he knows much less about himself.

<sup>611</sup> Of course, when he remembers of himself. This is for he must forget even about himself. If he remembers of himself, he will get ashamed because of his sins, because of his smallness, and because of his unworthiness. This is for he cannot remember of himself except in front of God.

<sup>612</sup> If the godlike darkness blinds the eyes of the Seraphs, all the more will be darkness to us because of our helplessness to know him, a helplessness much bigger than that of the Seraphs. It is a supra-luminous darkness. This is the idea belonging to Dionysus the Areopagite.

<sup>613</sup> Out of God there is overpoured silence over the angels, because of not being they able to know God's thoughts, for He is so wonderful that they no longer can express what they feel when they are near Him. Only those who are far from a wonderful thing are able to speak about that thing. The angels express their joy only through dance. This is for in dance they unwillingly express their joy of God.

**Word LXXXII**

The soul will enter effortlessly to understand the wisdom of God and of His creatures, if the soul appeases on himself of the world and of life's worries. This is for then he can know his nature and the treasures he has hidden within himself<sup>614</sup>. When the worries of the life do not enter the soul from outside, but the soul remains into his nature, the soul won't need to tire on himself for a long time in order to enter and to understand the wisdom of God. This is for the soul's separation from the world and the soul's appeasement, they will move the soul, naturally, towards understanding the creatures of God<sup>615</sup>. And from this one the soul ascends towards God and the soul gets amazed and the soul remains near God. This is for, when the water doesn't enter the soul's spring from outside, out of the natural water that springs out of the soul there will always sprout out the wonderful meanings of God<sup>616</sup>. But when the soul is outside

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<sup>614</sup> The soul knows the wisdom of God and the soul truly understands God's creatures, when the soul penetrates into himself by appeasing on himself. This is for the soul will see God and the meanings of the creatures hidden into God, through the soul's transparency.

<sup>615</sup> The soul will not more easily and more deeply and more effortlessly the infinite mystery of God, if the soul looks withing himself, than by gathering a big quantity of knowledge about the creatures. This is for such knowledge is infinite. But, out of his own indefinite, the soul can easily realize what the infinity of God is; or he sees his own indefinite as filled up with God's infinity.

<sup>616</sup> Saint Isaac discerns between passions and their causes. The passions are not within soul by nature, but the causes of the passions touch the soul. And only in this sense one can talk about souly passions. Therefore, we are giving here what Theotokis says: "In their own meaning, dispassionate (impassible, without passions) it is him who is unmoved towards evil and who is incapable of any passions. But in a second meaning, it can be called as dispassionate also him who is difficult to be moved towards a certain passion, and who can be cleaned of passions even if he is capable of passions. So, in the proper meaning dispassionate (impassible) by nature is only everybody's God. In the second meaning, the dispassion has been given to the people and to any rational nature. This is for if the peoples;' and angels' nature had been created by God as incapable of passions, neither Lucifer would have received the haughtiness, neither the parents of the mankind would have received the pride. That's why also Gregory the Theologian says about angels (in *Word at the Birth of the Savior*): "I would want to say that they are unmoved towards evil and that they have only the movement towards good, as ones who are around God, and they are the first one enlightened by God. But by that they enjoy a second light. But that makes me say and understand than they are not unmoved, but that he who has the name of Morningstar is difficult to be moved, and because of his haughtiness he has become and he is called as darkness. And the powers which have separated on themselves from Him have made on themselves to us too as causing the evilness by running aways from good". And about man he says (at the same place): "By sowing him him life from Himself, a fact which the Scriptures calls the man for as understanding soul and

those, or when the soul took occasion for that from some foreign memory, the senses will move against that soul some disturbance coming out of the encounter with the things.

But when the senses are closed by appeasement and when the sense are not allowed to jump here and there, and when the memories are getting old with the help of the appeasement, then the man sees the natural rationalities of his soul, what those rationalities are, and which the soul's nature is, and what hidden treasure the soul have within. And treasure is the understanding of the incorporeal realities moving within the soul by itself, without any worry or effort for it. But the man doesn't know that such thoughts are moving within the human nature. This is because who was his teacher? Or, how has the man understood, that what after he has understood, he cannot explain to others? Or, who was his guide towards what he hasn't learnt by any means from somebody else?

Of this kind it is the nature of the soul. So, the passions are added due to a souly cause. For the subject is dispassionate (without passions) by nature. So, when you hear the Scripture talking about souly and bodily passions, you must know that it speaks about the passions' causes. This is because by nature the soul is without passions<sup>617</sup>.

But the philosophers from outside do not admit this; likewise, neither their disciples. But we believe that God made him who is in God's image as dispassionate (non-passionate). And "in His image" I mean not according to the body, but according to the soul that is unseen. This is for any image is produced according to a preexistent image (a model). This is

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image of God, as a second big world into the small world, God placed the man on earth like another angel, mixed worshipper of the things from on earth, seer of the seen creation, mysteriously understanding the thought realities, emperor of the realities from on earth, mastered from above, earthly and heavenly, temporary and immortal, seen and thought, in the middle between greatness and humbleness etc.". So, in this second meaning spoke the Pious about the dispassion of the man, by saying: "For the soul is dispassionate by nature". This is for God created the man's nature as clean, undefiled, and stranger to any passion; but not also incapable of passion. "This is because by honoring him with the self-control, God allowed the dispassionate realities to remain within man".

If the dispassion of God means only not being Him moved towards evil, we can understand how, out of His love for people, the dispassionate Son of God took a suffering body, not in the sense that that body would have tended towards evil, but in the sense of His capacity to suffer out of His love for people. This is for the willing suffering out of love, it no longer is a passion in the sense attributed by the text in this *Word* and by the commentary of Theotokis.

<sup>617</sup> If the passions had belonged to the soul, they would have belonged also to the prototype which the soul was created according to, and the soul could have not become dispassionate.

because it will be impossible to somebody to represent an image if he doesn't see, in advance, something similar. So, you must believe that the passions, as I said before, they do not belong to the soul<sup>618</sup>. And if somebody opposes the said things, we will ask him, and let him answer.

**Question:** What the soul's nature is like? Is it dispassionate and full of light, or is it passionate and dark?

**Answer:** If the nature of the soul as yore transparent and clean by receiving the blessed light, the soul will be the same when ascending on the ancient level. So, when the soul moves passionately, the soul will obviously be outside the nature, as we are assured by them who are taught by Church. So, the passions entered the soul later, and it is not right to say that the passions belong to the soul, even if the soul moves within passions. Consequently, it is obvious that the soul moves into the external realities (when the soul is passionate), and not into his own. And if the soul doesn't move into these bodiless passions, they will be called as natural, and that's why the hunger, the thirst, and the sleep are souly too. This is for into these ones too, the soul suffers and sighs together with the body, as it happens in case of getting some limbs cut off or having fever or being sick or in similar situations. This is for the soul suffers the pains together with the body, as also the body suffers together with the soul. And the soul is moved by the body's living and the soul also receives the body's troubles. And of our God to be the glory and the mastery forever! Amen.

### Word LXXXIII

#### About Soul and about Passions; and about the Cleanness of the Mind. By Questions and Answers

**Question:** Which is the natural state of the soul? And which is the opposite-to-nature state? And which is the above-to-nature state?

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<sup>618</sup> The verbatims translation of the Greek text would be: "And if the soul moved within these incorporeal passions, they would be called natural, even if the hunger, the thirst, and the sleep are souly". But this form of the text is meaningless.



**Answer:** The natural state of the soul is the knowing of the creatures of God, of those submitted to the senses and of the thought (intelligible) ones. That above-nature-state is the movement of the sight (of the contemplation) of the above-being-godhead. And the opposite state is the passionate movement.

This is for the godlike and great Basil said: “The soul, when is according-to-nature, is lives into the upper realities; and when the soul is outside nature, he lives into the realities form outside the nature, low, on the ground. And when the soul is into the upper realities, he is dispassionate. And when the nature descends from its level, the passions take that nature into their mastery”<sup>619</sup>. It is obvious then that the souly passions aren’t souly by nature. Though the move into the body’s blameless passions as in hunger and as in thirst<sup>620</sup>, but because of not being set a law<sup>621</sup> to the soul in these things he is not blamed<sup>622</sup> for them, as much as he is reproached because of the others. Sometimes it also happens that god commands to somebody to do something seemingly inappropriate and that one is rewarded with good rewards instead of being rebukes and reproached. Prophet Hosea did such, when he married a whore, likewise did Prophet Elijah when he killed due to his zeal for God; they who obeyed Moses’s commandment did likewise and they killed their parents by the sword. In addition to that, they say that the lust and the anger (the wrath) belong to the soul, without the soul’s nature. And that these ones are the soul’s passions.

**Question:** Is it the lust according to nature when ignites for the godlike realities, or when the lust is in the earthly and

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<sup>619</sup> Unlike the scholastic teaching, according to which the fallen state is the state of “pure nature” of the man, the teaching of the fathers has a very high conception about the man’s nature. This is for, according to them, the man is in connection with God by his nature. And analogy: the connection with the air belongs to the man’s nature because the lung cannot function without air.

<sup>620</sup> “The hunger, the thirst, and the sleep, and the similar ones to these, they are not reproachable, neither blemished. This is for our Lord too, He received them into His all-unblemished body and he hungered for forty days and He thirsted at Jacob’s well and He slept on the board of the ship. But the pious called them as blemished because they are consequences of the corruption (of the nature)”.

<sup>621</sup> A law to stop them and to condemn them.

<sup>622</sup> “Those are not blamable, by any means”, says Theotokis. Still, because of representing state which the man easily falls into sin through, when satisfying them more than needed, the Pious was right not to count them in line with the states of ceaseless vigil, or of non-needing-food of the angels.

bodily things? And why the nature of the soul is filled up with zeal by anger? And why is it called the wrath (the anger) as natural? Is it that not because somebody gets wrath (gets angry) because of some bodily deed, or because of envy, or because of vain-glory? Or because of similar things? Or because of the things contrary to these ones? Let him who can answer, to answer, and we will follow him.

**Answer:** The godlike Scripture often uses names with a different meaning than the usual meaning. The things which belong to the soul the Scripture attributes to the body. And vice versa. And the Scripture doesn't separate these. Likewise, the aspects of the Lord's godhead were given as belonging to His holy body, despite being those things which doesn't fit the human nature. And again, the humble aspects were given as belonging to His godhead, though they belong to the human nature<sup>623</sup>. And many, by not understanding the purpose of the godlike words, they suffered an incorrigible work. It is likewise with the aspects of the soul and of the body. So, if the virtue is the health of the soul in a natural manner, the passions are illnesses of the soul entering the nature and occurring within nature and getting the nature out of its health. So, it is obvious that the health existed within nature from before the illness coming as something not belonging to the nature (as an accident). And if these are like so, as they truly are, the virtue is within soul as something natural. And the thing coming to it as something different (the accidents) are outside nature.

**Question:** The bodily passions are said as being natural to the body, or as coming haphazardly to the body, as something differing from the body (by accident)" And the passions of the soul which are into the soul, because of the soul's connection with the body, are they said to be naturally "of the soul", or this is said in an improper meaning?

**Answer:** The ones which belong to the body nobody dares to call them such, in a proper sense; and those belonging to the soul, once it is known to and it is confessed by everyone that the cleanness belongs to the soul in a natural manner, it would be appropriate one to dare and say that the passions do not belong to the soul in a natural manner, by any means. This is

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<sup>623</sup> This was on the ground of the communication of the features between the two natures. Here they authors is showing on himself again as anti-Nestorian, due to the fact that the Bearer of the two natures is one and the same Person or Hypostasis.

because the illness comes second after health. And it is impossible one and the same nature to be both good and bad. Therefore, necessarily, the goodness precedes the evilness. And the natural one is that one that existed before the another. This is because anything that is added as something different (as accident) is not said as being by nature, but it is said as something entering from outside. And any states which came and entered as something different (as accidents) they mean change. And the souly passions (affects) have been placed within man towards the man's benefit and growth. It is likewise with the souly ones<sup>624</sup>. This is because when the body is forced to be outside its good thriving by being deprived of its things and so the body is forced to follow the soul, the body will weaken and it will be harmed. And when the soul, by leaving his realities, he follows the body, the soul will be harmed as well, according to the godlike apostle who says: "The ghost lusts against the body and the body against the Ghost. This is because of these two being opposite to one another" (Gal. 5: 17). So, let nobody blaspheme on God because God would have sown the passions within our nature. This is for God placed within natures the things making those natures to grow up. But when those are separated from one another then the nature isn't within its things, but it is into the opposite things<sup>625</sup>. But if the passions have been within soul in a natural manner, why would have been the soul harmed by passions? For the things belonging to the nature won't harm the nature.

**Question:** But why the bodily passions which make the body to grow up and strengthen the body, they harm the soul, if

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<sup>624</sup> It is not here about the evil passions, but it is about those which we rather call as affects: hunger, thirst, bodily pain, which are mysteriously felt by the soul too; or, the body feels those because the soul feels those as well. Also, such is the sadness because of the sin, because of the suffering and because of the death of a relative, of a person known to us. In the Greek language these too are called as passions, because of the nature manifests towards them a certain passiveness. The nature doesn't cause those willingly, but they are imposed to nature unwillingly.

<sup>625</sup> The body doesn't commit sin when satisfying the affect of the hunger, neither the soul sins when getting sad for a sin, namely when each of them work according to an own affect. But when the soul is impeded by the body's delectation to get sad, then the soul commits something contrary to himself; and when the soul impeded the body to eat because of who knows what sad thought, the soul pushed the body towards something contrary to the body. The soul is harmed when impeded by the body to get sad. Then the soul's gladness becomes a passion. But is getting glad for sin had been natural within the soul, the soul wouldn't have been hurt by gladness.

they do not belong to this one? And why does the virtue persecute the body, but it provides growth to the soul?

**Question:** Can't you see that the things from outside nature harm the nature? This is because any nature, by getting closer to fulfilling the things characteristic to itself, it will be filled up with gladness. But, do you want to know what is characteristic to each one of these natures? Take heed that characteristic to each nature, are those which help that nature. And the things harming a nature are foreign to that nature and they enter that nature later. So, for it is a known thing that the passions of the two ones (body and soul) are opposite to one another, everything that helps the body it also provides the body with peace. And when the soul is shared with body's peace, we won't say that that peace belongs naturally to the soul. This is because the things which naturally belong to the soul they cause the death of the body. Still, through an opposite use, this death is attributed to the soul, and because of the body's weakness the soul cannot be free from suffering it too, as the body suffers it. This is for the soul is naturally imparted with the things saddening the body, due to the soul's union with the body's movement, through a non-understood wisdom. But though the body and the soul are in such a partaking (communion), still the movement of one is separated from the movement and will of the another; and the body is separated from ghost. And the nature doesn't change, but each of them, even if it tends strongly either towards sin or towards virtues, it is moved by its will. And when the soul is elevated through the care for the body, the soul will flourish through the ghost all his movements so that the soul would will swim into the waters of the heavens in non-understood realities; and the soul won't allow the body to thing at its own needs, even if those needs are accomplished. And if the body is again into sins, the soul's thoughts won't cease from jumping up within mind<sup>626</sup>.

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<sup>626</sup> Rarely one can find in a patristic writing such an insistence upon the so intimate and mysterious connection between soul and body, upon the union and the movements and the feelings of theirs. But still, the body and the soul are not confounded to one another. We have here some sort of unmixed-union, as in the union of the two natures in the Person of the Word. When the body is weakened and mortified through an intense preoccupation of the soul with the spiritual realities, the intense weakness and mortification will be felt by the soul as well. This is for, on one hand the soul rejoiced of living the spiritual realities, while on the other hand the soul suffers for the body's toils and pains. But the inverse can take place too. The body feels in his pains a comforting coming fork the joy experienced by the soul.

**Question:** What the cleaning of the mind is?

**Answer:** Clean in his mind was not him who doesn't know the evil, because in this case he would be like an animal; neither him who is within his nature in the age of the children; neither him who puts on the mask of the cleanness. But the cleanness of the mind is that cogitation that has reached into the godlike realities, after working the virtues. And we do not dare to say that somebody has achieved this, without the trial from his thoughts, because otherwise he wouldn't be dressed up into a body<sup>627</sup>. This is for we do not dare saying that our nature is not warred up to death. And the trial from the thoughts means one not obeying them, but setting up the beginning of the fight against thoughts.

### **The Causes of the Thoughts' Movement**

The movement of the thoughts within man takes place due to four reasons. First, out of the will of the natural body<sup>628</sup>. Second, out of imagining by the senses the world's things, which the soul sees and hears. Third, out of the sinful habits and tendencies of the soul, which the soul bears in mind. Fourth, out of the attacks (bites) from the devils warring us through all the passions, because of the reasons shown by us before. That's why, the man cannot remain without thoughts and war until his death, as long as he is in the life of this body. This is because, you judge if some one of the four causes can cease before the deliverance from the world and before death; or if it is necessary that the soul searches for the things for survival, let him not lust for some of the things of the world<sup>629</sup>.

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<sup>627</sup> The cleanness of the mind isn't a mind emptied of any thinking, but it means the thinking of the mind gathered into God. That is not reached by anybody without crossing through the experience of the tempting thoughts, because if that was the case, he wouldn't be dressed up into a body.

<sup>628</sup> When the soul gets above the care for his body, the soul's movement flourish through the Ghost, by swimming into the deep waters of the heavenly meanings. And those movements no longer allow the body to be dominated by the sensation of its deeds, even though those deeds are being done. The body eats, the body breathes, but as the body wouldn't eat or breathe. The will of the body is being done, but without any passions. And inversely, when the body moved into sins, the soul doesn't cease thinking, but the soul's thoughts are defiled by the sinful movements of the body.

<sup>629</sup> Those are the thoughts set in motion by hunger, by thirst, by the resting after getting tired, by pain, and by the urge of the blood towards mating in order to procreate children. All these thoughts can take the shape of some sinful thoughts.

And if it is insanity to somebody cogitating at something like this, for the nature needs all of these, the passions move in every one who wears a body, either he wants or not. That's why everybody must guard on himself against not a sole passion that moves within him ceaselessly and manifestly, neither only against two, but he must guard on himself against several passions, as one who still wears a body<sup>630</sup>. They who have defeated their passions by their virtues, though they still are hindered by the thoughts and by the attacks coming from those four causes, they no longer are defeated by those, for they have power and for their mind is kidnapped to good and godlike memories.

**Question:** What differs the cleanness of the mind from the cleanness of the heart through?

**Answer:** Something else is the cleanness of the mind and something else is the cleanness of heart. The mind is one of the soul's feelings<sup>631</sup>. And the heart is that one that comprises and keeps together the inward feelings<sup>632</sup>. The heart is the root. And if the root is holy its branches will be holy as well. Of, if the heart is being cleaned up, all the feelings will obviously be cleaned up. If the mind takes care of reading the godlike Scriptures, or if the mind also toils a little in fasting and in vigils and in appeasement, the mind will forget about the previous living and it will be cleaned when getting far from the defiled behavior. But the mind won't have a steadfast cleanness. This is because, as the mind quickly gets cleanness, as quickly the mind gets defiled too.

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<sup>630</sup> The passions move within the actual man, or they potentially lay within him, but he still can avoid appropriating them, he still can keep them at distance even though he feels them. This means that there is within man an almost continuous battle between his self and the passions, or that there is necessary a continuous guarding against passions.

<sup>631</sup> This is a definition of the mind in conformity to the whole thinking of the fathers. The most it is conceived like that by Saint Isaac the Syrian and by Saint Simeon of the New Theologian. The mind is feeling, so that the mind is understanding as well. The mind is an understanding feeling, for it enters the contact with the realities which are not submitted to the bodily senses. But for those are intelligible realities, namely they are full of meanings, in the contact with them the mind notices, it received in itself their meanings which are, in the same time, realities. The human subject is a richness of meanings. But the human subject is perceived by another by meeting him by communication between him and another subject.

<sup>632</sup> So, the heart is sharper in understanding than the mind is. The heart doesn't only perceive the meanings of the intelligible realities as the mind does, but the heart rather perceives those realities in their wholeness (life, power, harmony etc.).

And the heart is being cleaned through many troubles and deprivations and by getting far from the partaking with the all the realities world and through the death towards everything. And once the heart has been cleaned, and its cleanness won't be defiled again, by material things, neither the heart will be scared of the great and unseen wars, namely of the fearsome realities. This is for then the heart will have gained a strong stomach that can digest any food that cannot be digested by the weak ones. This is for the physicians say: each meal of meat is difficult to digest, but it gives much power to the healthy bodies when the meal is received by a strong stomach. Thus, any cleanness that is quickly, and in a short time, and with a little effort gained, that cleanness will quickly be lost and defiled too. But that cleanness gained through many troubles and built up during a long time, it won't be scarred by a little attack in some small part of the soul. This is for God strengthen that soul. His to be the glory forever! Amen.

#### **Word LXXXIV**

#### **About the Seeing of that Incorporeal Nature. Through Questions and Answers**

**Question:** On how many diverse ways the human nature receives the view of the bodiless realities?

**Answer:** On three different ways<sup>633</sup>, the feeling of the human nature catches any non-composed and subtle nature of

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<sup>633</sup> "The feeling of the immaterial beings it is received by the human nature on three ways. First is through the feeling of the body: as in case of Abraham at Mamre Oak Tree; by feeling the Three above-being Hypostasis, as in case of Lot; and on the way of those who were a hosted in Sodom etc.; these ones were seen in some thickened and material being and having a human image. Second, through the sight of the soul, as in case of Isaiah who was sitting on a tall and elevated throne, and he saw the Seraphs with six wings around him and he also saw a Seraph who was sent to him; as in case of old Daniel; and as in case of Hezekiel who saw the shiny angels. They saw those in a certain thin and immaterial hypostasis... and they saw those also through the power of their understanding. This last mode is nothing else, I reckon, but the understanding sight of the mind, through which they who have reached the measure of the virtues, they have become accustomed to sometime elevate their cogitation from the earth and from the earthly things to the contemplation of the ghosts of the righteous, on some the times of the hierarchies of the angels, and on some other times of Himself the All-High

the spiritual bodies<sup>634</sup>: or in the thickness of the hypostasis in being; or in the thinness of the hypostasis outside being; or through the true contemplation that is the existential contemplation<sup>635</sup>.

The senses have the power for the first way of sight<sup>636</sup>. On the second way it is the soul who sees with its most marginal<sup>637</sup> part. And on the third way of seeing, he sees the understanding, by the power of the understanding. And for both last ways of seeing, there have power the will and the understanding. In those which depend of will and on the soul's commendable aspects and on That One Who unites Himself with these ones<sup>638</sup>, the first one is the will. And these sights are the grand daughters of the freedom<sup>639</sup>, though, when needed, the freedom and the will, they enter the state of the quietude and they stop, and thereafter only the godlike work will take place. Then the two sights seem like one and the true knowledge is being done

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Emperor of the glory. This last way was called by the Pious as true and existential contemplation. The first way doesn't depend on us, because the sights through senses are done through the benevolence of God. But the second way and the third way depend on us, for our soul and our will must collaborate with the will of God, in order the sights of the soul and the understandings of the mind to take place. These things are said by the Pious in continuation."

<sup>634</sup> "Spiritual bodies" he calls in continuation themselves the incorporeal and immaterial beings, whom he called also as non-composed nature.

<sup>635</sup> We do not know what this existential contemplation would mean; it seems to us that it is about a contemplation of the spiritual reality in itself, non-dressed up in images, through a full communion with it. In such a man there no longer work anything within him except for the Holy Ghost.

<sup>636</sup> This way too of sights through senses takes place because the senses are penetrated by the power of the Holy Ghost.

<sup>637</sup> We haven't found a satisfactory translation solution to this locution. Though in the source text it is about the "part of the soul situated at the most far *edge* of the soul", we think that the author intended to express that it is about that part of the soul that is the less *in contact with the body's matter*, or *the most superior* from spiritual point of view. And marginal means also *unimportant*. We beg the interested reader to find a better term, and to improve our translation before sharing it with other people! (E. l. t.'s n.)

<sup>638</sup> If the sights through senses depend only on the work of God, the two last modes of knowledge will depend on the together-working of the human will and of God (they are results of the synergy).

<sup>639</sup> First there is the freedom, and then there is the work for cleaning the will (that is the daughter of the freedom) and then there is the knowledge on the two last ways, which are the grand daughters of the freedom. Nicephorus Theotokis gives us this explanation: "The freedom moves the will, and the will moves the soul and the cogitation, towards contemplation. And in the time of the cogitation, the freedom and the will they get appeased, and the soul and the cogitation work". Better said, after the will and the freedom stop, there will be the Holy Ghost seeing and working through us.



without the will of him who received it. This is for the senses receive, without their will, all the realities which they come across with<sup>640</sup>. On these three ways the Holy Powers fulfill their service in partaking (in communion) with us, towards teaching us and towards founding our life<sup>641</sup>.

But the unclean devils cannot move within us except the two first ways, when they draw near to us towards destroying us and not in our benefit. On the third ways the devils cannot come close to us in order to deceive us. This is for the devils have no power, by any means, to move within us the natural thoughts into cogitation. This is because it is impossible to the sons of the darkness to come close to the light<sup>642</sup>. But the holy angels have the power to defeat and to illuminate. The devils are the masters and the contrivers of the liar meanings, or of the grandsons of the darkness. Thus, from them who illuminate the soul will receive luminous light; and from the dark ones the soul will receive darkness.

**Question:** And which the cause is that it has been given to those, and to these it hasn't been given at all (the third way)?

**Answer:** Each one of these teachers firstly sees within himself the understanding that he learns it and that he finds it out and that he receives it and that he tastes it and then he can teach it to them whom he teaches to. The first teachers teach further on the detailed knowledge of the things from the healthy knowledge. They are the ones who can understand from the beginning, with a sharp understanding of their all-sharpened and all-clean mind. And the devils have quickness but they have not light<sup>643</sup>. And something else is the quickness and something

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<sup>640</sup> Like the external senses see the things without their will, likewise the soul's senses see, without their will, the immaterial realities. Then, the two sights appear to be one or, like Theotokis says, our work and the work of the Holy Ghost are like one. Our sight has been totally infused with the sight of the Ghost.

<sup>641</sup> On these three ways of seeing, or of knowledge, are not only us working, or only the Holy Ghost, but also the angelic powers are working, when we know them, or, with their help, we can know God too.

<sup>642</sup> The cogitation is luminous light by themselves its thoughts. The devils cannot set the luminous light in motion within us.

<sup>643</sup> There are too people who understand quickly what they are told and they talk back quickly, but they notice only what is at the surface of what is being said, and not the depth and the complexity of what is being communicated. They notice only one side of what they are told, or a superficial summary. They give us the impression of being "smart", but they actually aren't. The devils are likewise. The deep mysteries of the existence remain hidden from them. The devil quickly slide of the vast surface of the reality, but they do not penetrate the reality's endless dimension in depth.

else if the light. The quickness without light, it will lead to perdition him who has it<sup>644</sup>. This makes the hallucination seem real<sup>645</sup>. This is for only the light shows the truth of the things and the light is multiplied or diminished according to the living<sup>646</sup>.

The holy angels overpour within us their knowledge about the movements of the things, out of the knowledge firstly tasted by them and understood by them, and thereafter the angels teach that knowledge to us too. The second teachers<sup>647</sup>, they also move within us the knowledge about the movement of the things on the measure of their own knowledge. This is for they are not compelled to move within us right thoughts about things which they do not remember<sup>648</sup>. Though, you still must believe, as I said before, that even if we were able to receive, they couldn't teach us the true sight, despite they were, in the beginning, in that sight. And again, each of them, according to the *oikonomia* which he is appointed to, he urges them whom he teaches, either towards these or towards the opposite things.

And I truly know that our mind can move even without the mediation of the holy angels, by itself, towards good, even without being taught. But the knowledge of the evil things will not be received by our senses without the mediation of the

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<sup>644</sup> That is a quickness in understanding but without profoundness, and almost only in the service of the criticism. That's why such a quickness without profoundness, it will lead him who has it, to his destruction.

<sup>645</sup> "The statue of the truth". Something else is the living man and something else is the inanimate and void on inside and imitating the reality of the man statue, consisting of a brass bark, that imitates the living hypostasis of the man. Saint Isaac gives as cause of confounding the hallucination to the truth, the superficial quickness which somebody looks at the reality with. This superficial quickness is characteristic to the devils and to any man who looks quickly, but superficially, at the realities. This is a quickness coming also out of the impatience of living the reality with the whole being.

<sup>646</sup> Only the light shows the truth of the things. But this light depends of the things themselves, or also on themselves. In order to see that light one must live the things in their reality, though this light is had also by them who are in a concordance to the things. Only they know the whole truth who live the true reality; the truth is known only to them who live in the true reality, or who have the true reality within themselves. And the more they live in the true reality, the more they will know the light of that reality, or that reality's truth, and not a hallucination about that.

<sup>647</sup> The second teachers are the devils.

<sup>648</sup> Theotokis says about the second teachers that they are the devils. That's why he modifies that text which it is said in: "They are compelled to move within us right thoughts about the things which they do not remember". We too have accepted the modification operated by him. But not only the devils, but also the people having not experienced the profound things, they do the same when wanting to teach us.

devils, neither that knowledge will move within our senses. And our senses cannot work the evil by themselves. This is for the good is sown within nature, but the evil isn't by any means<sup>649</sup>. Every foreign thing entering our nature from outside it, it needs a mediator in order its knowledge to be received<sup>650</sup>. But what spring out from within, it will move within the nature without being at all thought to do that. And if the nature is like so, it is possible to the nature to move itself towards good on its own, then it will be possible the nature's growth and the light without contemplating (seeing) the angels. But the angels are our teachers, as they are to one another too. The lower angels take their learning from the upper angels who look at them, and the lower angels have the light on this way, and so they are elevated through others, until they will reach that level which they have on, as teacher, the Holy Trinity. That's why the angels on the first level dare to say that they do not have their light from themselves, but they have Jesus as Mediator Who they receive their light and they share their light to the angels from below them.

But I reckon that our mind has a natural power for moving itself towards the godlike contemplation (seeing)<sup>651</sup>. And

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<sup>649</sup> Saint Isaac is very optimistic in understanding the human nature.

<sup>650</sup> "A foreigner entering from outside" he is calling here the evil. This is learnt by the nature through the mediation of the demons, and it doesn't move within nature by itself. Saint Isaac affirms always the same optimistic vision upon our nature.

<sup>651</sup> Here seems to be affirmed what it is denied further on. This is because further on he says: "It is stranger by nature to the human and angelic mind". So, what must we say else than that by speaking about the natural power, he actually understands that power strengthened by grace. This is for he says: "For they are moving within us and the grace within them". The mind's nature can receive the grace, and with the power of the grace the mind moves itself toward contemplating the infinite God. So, contemplating God is both according to nature and above-nature. It is according to nature for the nature is capable of fulfilling this fact, when strengthened by grace; it is above-nature because the nature cannot contemplate the infinite God by its own power.

Further on he says again: "In all the rational realities, in the first ones and in the ones from the middle, the contemplation isn't moves by nature but by grace; in all the existing (created) realities, there are both the heavenly realities and the earthly realities". So, according to this word (either we understand by the first ones and by the middle ones the upper and the lower groups of the angels, and lower than those there are the people) the mind cannot contemplate anything of the created realities, by its nature. But he adds: "Not the nature has understood this, as on the other things". According to this word, there are some things which can be understood through the power of the nature. But which those things are? This is because he only said: "In all the existing (created) realities, in the heavenly ones and in the earthly ones". "Earthly" I reckon that he calls the Providence and the oikonomia of the all-loving God stretched over all the earthly realities, or the nature of His material creatures. This is because

through this desire we are the same with all the heavenly natures, for both within us and within them there is moving the grace<sup>652</sup>. But it still remains a stranger by nature thing, to the human and angelic minds. This is because the contemplation of the godhead it is counted among the other contemplations. On the other hand, in all the rational creatures, in the first one and in the middle ones, in the existing (created) ones, both the heavenly one and the earthly ones, the contemplation doesn't move according to nature but by grace. And it hasn't understood this by nature, as those of the other things.

The contemplation with the mind, which the level and the sight of the angelic one move in<sup>653</sup>, it was not in their power before the coming of Christ into body. So, the angels were unable to enter these mysteries before Christ's embodiment. But when the Word embodied on Himself, to the angels was open the door into Jesus, as the Apostle says<sup>654</sup>.

But even if we get cleaned, I reckon - and that is true - that we the people with our thoughts cannot draw near to the unveilings and to the knowledge leading us towards that eternal contemplation (seeing), which truly is the unveiling of the

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who among angels and people could know the judgments of the Providence of God only by the power of his own nature? "Oh, the deep of the richness and of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God - shouts out Paul -, how impenetrable are His judgments and how untrodden are His ways! This is because who knew the Lord's mind? Or who was His adviser?" (Rom. 11: 33). It is likewise relatedly to the nature of the creatures, not only that of the people, but also that of the angels, it may be non-understood to them. And by "the others of the things" I mean the skillful use of their moral and human features, which can be understood by them who have a rational nature and who are guided by light.

<sup>652</sup> The human and angelic nature is good, it moves by itself towards good and towards God, but this is also because of using what it has in the same time with the help from God, for it is kindred to God, and it is in correlation - at least an implicit correlation - to God. Olivier Clément, after quoting Dostoyevsky's saying that "the man cannot preserve his human image except as long as he believes in God", he adds: "we say it more modestly, as long as the man remains capable of transcending on himself towards the encounter with the mystery. If this encounter is missed, if this surpassing movement doesn't take place, the (human) face will lose its gravitation center, namely this spiritual opening for the other world, relatedly to which it ordines itself." (*Le visage intérieur* Paris, Stock, 1978, p. 19).

<sup>653</sup> But that can be understood about angels as well. Neither they knew so much the mysteries of God before the embodiment of the Word (Eph. 3: 10).

<sup>654</sup> Apostle Paul says in 1 Cor. 16: 9: "A big door was opened to me"; and in 2 Cor. 2: 12: "When I came to Troas for the Gospel of Christ, a door was opened to me into the Lord"; and in Col. 4: 3, he says: "You pray for us too, in order God to open us the door for us to speak the mystery of Christ Whom I was tied for". He who advises, but also him who is being cleaned up, he will always see being open new doors in front of him, in the richness of meanings of Christ.

mysteries, without the mediation of those ones. This is because of not having out mind such a power as the beings from above have, namely they who receive in an unmediated manner the unveilings and the sights from the Eternal One. But they too receive that in icon and not in a plain manner. And our mind does the same. And each level received that from the superior level, on the ground of an *oikonomia* and of a knowledge that descends from the first level to the second level and so on, downwardly, until the mystery crosses through all levels<sup>655</sup>. But many of the mysteries are stopped on the first level and they won't pass to the next lower level. This is because of not being able the other levels to receive the greatness of the mystery without receiving it from the superior levels. And some of the mysteries by getting out of the first level, they will be unveiled only to the second level and they will be guarded there silently<sup>656</sup>, and other levels won't understand these mysteries. And some mysteries pass to the third or to the fourth level. And it takes place thus a growth and a diminution in the unveiling which can be seen by the holy angels. And it that happens to those ones, all the more we cannot receive such mysteries without a mediation.

So, from them (from the angels) it falls within the saints' mind the feeling of the unveiling of each mystery; and this takes place when it is allowed by God to be unveiled from level to level, from the highest level to the lowest level, and thus, when it is allowed something to reach, by godlike consent, down to the human nature, namely to the people who have been forever worthy of that. Through them the saints receive the light of the understanding up to the glorious eternity, namely the untaught

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<sup>655</sup> Everything corresponds to what the Areopagites wrote in his *heavenly Hierarchy* (chapter I). Even the most superior angelic groups receive the seeing of God in "icon" that is something matching their nature. But they are themselves, by their nature, "image" or "icon" of the infinite person, or of the godlike interpersonal communion. In this is too an opening towards the godlike infinity, but also a characterization of what they receive in accordance to their nature.

<sup>656</sup> Each level receives as much as it fits it. So, the first level cannot convey to the next lower level everything that they received, but the first level will keep their silence about a part of what they received, in their own meditation, because the next lower level cannot receive everything. But the next lower level learns something out of the silence of the next superior level. The inferior level sees in the level superior to it a mystery that exceeds its understanding. Even in front of each man one can see also a silence, an impossibility of communicating everything that man lives, but which himself is sunk into. About this silence heavy with untold silence Olivier Clément spoke in the book mentioned previously.

mystery; and they receive that from one another. This is for they are “serving ghosts sent to them who are being prepared to reach being inheritors of the life” (Hebr. 1: 14). But in the age to come, this order will cease. This is for then will no longer be received from one another the unveiling of the glory of God, towards the joy and the happiness of the soul. But each one will be given – through himself – that what will match him according to his worthiness, directly from the Master, on the measure of his good features; and no one will receive the gift from somebody else, as it is happening now. This is for there will no longer be either him who teaches nor him who learns, neither him who need to satisfy his need for knowledge from another. This is for One is the Giver, and He will give in an unmediated manner, them who will be able to receive. And they who will receive the heavenly gladness they will receive it directly from Him. Then the levels of them who teach and of them who learn will cease existing, and the strength of their desire will hang on The One.

And I am saying that they who will be tormented into Gehenna they will be whipped by the whip of the live. And what more bitter and more awful torment there beside the torment of the love! Namely, they who will feel that they have mistaken towards the love, they will suffer there a worse torment than any other torment regardless how scary. This is because that sadness imprinted within heart by the sin towards the love it is sharper than any torment.

It is a madness to somebody to reckon that in Gehenna the sinners will be deprived of the love from God. The love is the offspring of the knowledge of the truth, which, according to the general witness, it has been given to anyone. But the love works by its power in two ways: it torments the sinners, as for instance it happens here to somebody because of his friend; and the love gladdens them who guarded the appropriate things<sup>657</sup>. And this is, in my view, the sorrow of the torment from the Gehenna. But the love will make drunk the souls of them who will be above, with its delectation.

**Question:** Somebody was asked: when does one know that he has receive the forgiveness of his sins>

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<sup>657</sup> You will be tormented by the conscience that you haven’t answered appropriately to the love of your friend, to his hope placed in you by his love, or to the hope of others who were appealing your love.

**Answer:** And he was answered: when he feel in his soul that he consummately hated those previous sins of his, with the whole his heart<sup>658</sup>; And when in the things shown to him one doesn't lead on himself in an opposite (to God) manner. One like this will have been entrusted that he will have achieved from God the forgiveness of his mistakes born out of sins, as one who will have hated his sin according to the conscience which he will have gained it within himself, according to the Apostle's word: "That though that doesn't condemn on himself that is its own witness" (Rom. 2: 15, according to the meaning). May us too, achieve the forgiveness of our sins, by the grace and by the love for people of the Without-Beginning Father, together with His Only Begotten Son and with the Holy Ghost Whom it is due the glory forever and ever! Amen.

## WORD LXXXV

### About Diverse Themes. By Questions and Answers

**Question:** What bond is the man's heart tied with, in order not to run towards the evil things?

**Answer:** By the fact that it always follows the wisdom and it progresses into the learning about life. This is because there isn't a stronger bond for the disorder of the cogitation.

**Question:** What limit him who follows the wisdom desires to reach at? And when will his learning have become consummate?

**Answer:** It is impossible to anybody to reach such a limit in his progress. This is because the saints too have shortcomings when it comes about consummation. The trip of the wisdom has no end. He who follows the wisdom he will be elevated until he will be united with God. And this is the sign of that: that its understanding is limitless. This is for the wisdom of God Himself.

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<sup>658</sup> You will have to have yourself souly detached from your sins, in order God too to detach you from those sins; in this you will feel that God Himself will have detached you from your previous sins. It is here too an application of the synergy.

**Question:** Which are the first path and the first beginning helping us to come closer to wisdom?

**Answer:** That is the following with the whole our power the wisdom of God and to strive with the whole our soul to following it to the very end and being us ready to yield even our life when we must reject our own life and when we must throw our life from ourselves, for the love for God.

**Question:** Who can be rightly called as wise?

**Answer:** He who truly understand that this live have a border, he can set a border to his mistakes. This is because what knowledge or understanding is bigger than that or getting somebody so wise that to exit this life into incorruptibility, by not having any part of his defiled by this life's sweetness? There is no other mindless man within world than that one who, by thinning all his thoughts in order to penetrate the mysteries of the creatures and by enriching on himself through research and understanding into the whole knowledge, he has his soul, in the same time, defiled by the filthiness of the sin and he hasn't achieved the proof of his hope, but he still reckons that he has reached the shore of the doubtlessness. This is because his deeds haven't brought him except to the hope in this life, in his ceaseless travelling towards it.

**Question:** Who is the strongest into truth?

**Answer:** He who preserved his gladness into the temporary troubles, which is hidden in the life and the glory of his victory, and he doesn't lust for a luxury life, which hides in the smell of the shame. He has found the cup of the sigh which has been watering him all the time.

**Question:** What is that that harms, therefore, in the trip towards God, on him who deviates from the good deeds because of temptations?

**Answer:** Nobody can get closer to God without trouble, and nobody can guard his righteousness unchanged, without God. And if one stops the things which increase the trouble, he will stop also the things which guard his righteousness, and he will be like an unguarded treasure and like disarmed warrior and like a ship lacking its oars and like a Paradise whose water spring went dry.

**Question:** Who is the enlightened one in his thoughts?

**Answer:** Anyone who has reached to find out the bitterness hidden into the world's sweetness and who has impeded his mouth from drinking this cup and who researches



the aspects regarding the salvation of his soul and who doesn't stop in his way until he will be separated from this world; anyone who closes up his senses, in order the desire of this life not to enter him and steal from within him the hidden treasure of the life.

**Question:** What this world is? And how can we know this world? And what harms them who love this world?

**Answer:** The world is a tempter attracting through the lusting of its beauty on them who see it, to (passionately) desiring it. And he who has been partially caught by desiring the world and he mate with the world, he won't be able to ever escape the world's arms until the world will disrobe him of his life. And when the world will have disrobed him of all his things and it will get him out of his house on the day of his death, then he will know that the world is a beguiling and a deceiver. And when somebody strives to exit the darkness of the world, while he still remains hidden into the world, he cannot see the world's intertwinings. And the world masters not only its disciples and its sons and on them who are tied within the world, but the world also masters on the non-earning ones, on ascetics, and on them who have broken their ties and ascended above the world. This is for the world has started to hunt them on diverse ways and the world tramples on them and the world throws them under its feet.

**Question:** What should we do to our body when it is engulfed by pain and burden; when it gets mellowed the body's asceticism born out of the desire for good and from the body's initial strength?

**Answer:** This happens often to some people: a half of them have exited the world in order they to follow the Lord's traces, and half of people remained into the world and their heart hasn't got broken from the things from here, but they got divided within themselves. And they sometimes look ahead and sometimes they look back. As I reckon, the wiseman urged them who are thus divided and close to the Lord's way, by telling them: "Do not get close to it with two hearts, but get closer to it as him who sows and reaps" (Wisdom of Syrach<sup>659</sup> 1:

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<sup>659</sup> This book is not given in King James Bible. Its full name in the Romanian Orthodox Bible is: *The Wisdom of Joshua, the Son of Syrach (The Ecclesiastes)*. Please notice that it is not the same with *Ecclesiastes*. The interested reader can find in along with the other thirteen book

27). And the Lord, by knowing them who haven't totally rejected the world, but they still are divided and turned in their mind, better said in their thought, towards the things from back, on the ground of their fear of troubles and because of not having yet thrown from themselves the lust of their body, He told them a decisive word: "Anyone who wants to follow Me, let him first reject on himself:" and the followings (Mt. 16: 24).

**Question:** What does it mean somebody to reject on himself?

**Answer:** As him who has prepared on himself to climb the cross, he no longer keeps in his mind except the thought at his death, and he starts like a man who no longer thinks at having some little piece of the life of this age, likewise is him who wants to fulfill that what has been said. This is for the cross is that will that is ready to receive any trouble. And when the Lord wanted to teach us again, why must we do that, He said: "He who wants to life in this world he will lose on himself from the true life; and he who loses on himself here, for Me, he will find on himself there" (Mt. 10: 3). This one is him who walk the way of the cross.

He who takes care of this life, he has lost on himself by falling off his hope which he has started to walk towards enduring the troubles. This is for this worry doesn't allow him to receive the trouble for God, but it gradually attracts him off from persevering into the trouble, and it get him off the middle of the fight for the happy life, and it makes this though growing up within him until it will defeat him. But he who loses his soul for Me in his cogitation due to his longing for Me, he will be preserved as innocent and unharmed for the eternal life. This is what the following word means: "He who loses his soul for Me, he will find his soul". So, you must prepare from here, from within you, your soul, by your total loss for the present life. And if you lose on yourself from this world, the Lord will tell you in this meaning: "And I will give you eternal life as I promised you" (Jn. 10: 21). And if you remain in this life, I will show you here My promise in the deed, and I will assure you about the future goods. And you will not that you are in the eternal life when you despise thins life. And when you enter the fight for this preparation, there are despised in your eyes all the painful and

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not present in KJB, on [www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu), in English translation, grouped with the others under the title *Bible Missing Texts*.

causing of trouble things. This is for, when the mind is prepared thus, the mind won't have struggle either trouble, in time of mortal danger. That's why you must be thoroughly convinced that, if the man doesn't hate his life within world due to his desire for the future and happy life, he won't be able to endure, by any means, the troubles and all sorts of pains coming upon him on each moment.

**Question:** How does the man cut off his previous habit and how he accustomed on himself to the life into poverty and asceticism?

**Answer:** The body doesn't want to live without the necessary things, as long as the body remains tied to the causes of the delectation and of the drowsiness. And the mind won't be able to restrain the body from those, until the mentioned body doesn't estrange on himself from all the things which cause the body's idleness. This is because, when the body has in front of it the image of the delectation and of the things and the body constantly sees the causes of its drowsiness, there will be stirred up within body the hot lust for those, and that lust arouses the body as by burning it with fire.

That's why, with much righteousness our Savior commanded him who wants to follow Him, to empty on himself of all things and to get out of the world. This is for, in the first place, the man must throw away from himself the causes of his drowsiness, and then he must start working. And the Lord Himself, when He started fighting the devil, He fought the devil in the driest desert. And Paul urges them who take up the cross of Christ, they to get off the city: "Let's get out together with Him, he says, outside the city, for He suffered outside the city" (Hebr. 13: 12).

When somebody parts with the world and with the world's things, he will quickly forget about his habit and living from before, and he won't toil for a long time in order to detach on himself from those. And by his closeness to the world and to the world's things, he will quickly get drowsed the strength of his cogitation. That's why, we must know that this detachment helps much and it leads one to progress in the savior fight of the asceticism.

It is ought to and it is very helpful that in this fight the monk's monastic cell to be in poverty and in needs; the monastic call must be empty and lacking anything that can move within the move his lust for resting. This is because, when

the causes of the drowsiness are far from the man, he won't be endangered in the twofold war: in the inwards war and in the outside war. So, that man who is far from the things which urge him towards pleasure, he will be victorious with less struggle, than when he is close to those who move him towards lusts. Here he has a twofold fight.

This is because, when the man lacks what he needs for sustaining his dwelling place<sup>660</sup>, he will easily despise what it is necessary, and he won't look at that lustily neither at that time when he has it for a small impartation with it, and his body will get satisfied with a little and he will see this little as easily to be despised and he won't get close to the food for its sweetness but in order to use it for helping him and to strengthen his nature.

These behaviors easily elevate somebody to that asceticism upheld by a thinking that lacks the trouble and the sadness. So, the zealous monk must run away without turning back, with a nimble foot, from all the things which wage war to him and he must not get involved with the things which wage war to him, and he must restrain on himself even from simply looking at those, and he must get far from those with the whole his power.

This is because, he who live in such an asceticism he will wound his enemy, by being in that state that is above his enemy's plots, and he is gladdening Lord Jesus Who the deliverance of them who fight together with Him is being accomplished through. This is because, getting drowsy in some regard, by him who lives in asceticism, it will be reckoned as a victory upon him, and of that victory is glad the enemy and is sad the Holy Ghost<sup>661</sup>.

And I am saying this not only about the stomach, but also about all the things that can be submitted to temptation and to war, which the freedom of the man is tested and proven through.

This is because the man, when he comes to God, he makes a covenant with God him to keep himself far from these things: not to look at woman, not to see adorned persons, not to lust anything, not to delight on himself with foods, not to look

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<sup>660</sup> It maybe is here about body.

<sup>661</sup> This paragraph is missing from the Greek printed text, as also from the newer typewritten manuscript. This paragraph is in the newer Romanian text printed in the year 1819. So, one can see that this last text used a different Greek text, or one more Greek text, for translation. But this paragraph might also have been, in the beginning, a marginal scholium.

at the beauty of the vestments, not to look at the laymen way of living, not to listen to laymen words, and not to inquire the things related to laymen. This is because of the passions getting much power out of the closeness to such things which mellow up him who lives in ascesis and they change his cogitation and assertiveness. This is for, if seeing good things will move the will to lean with true zeal towards working those, it is obvious that the things which are opposite to the good ones they will have the power to attract the cogitation towards evil. And even is out of evil things the cogitation will only be warred up, this too will still be enough damage: this is because he passes willingly from the peaceful state into disturbance.

And is somebody among the ascetic old men, by seeing somebody without wearing a beard, like the women, he reckoned that thing as harmful to cogitation and damaging to his fight, won't be wrong him who is careless in other things, while this saint didn't accept a young man to enter his monastic cell and to kiss him? This is for the wise old man thought like so: "Even if I only remember at night that inside here is somebody like that, it will be hurtful to me". And that's why he didn't enter and he said that young man: "I am not afraid of you, but why to allow you to wage me war vainly? This is because the memory of such things causes an unbeneficial disturbance to the cogitation. This is for within each limb of this body there is a spell and the man has a big war because of those and the man owes to guard on himself and to diminish his war from those, by running away from them. This is because, when the man gets closer to those ones, even if the man strives towards good, he still will be endangered by them by looking at them and by lusting them continuously".

This is because we see many smelling herbs hidden into the ground. But we cannot know those in summer because of the drought. But, when they get soaked with water and they spread their fragrance through the mediation of the fresh air, every plant species shows where it was buried into the soil. It is likewise to the man. When the man is in the grace of the appeasement and into the heat of the restraint, he will truly be resting on himself of his many passions. But when he gets closer to the world's things, he will see what each passion will

rise up like. And his head will become frivolous, especially if those passions will spread a resting fragrance<sup>662</sup>.

And I have said this, in order nobody to believe his body until his death; and in order I to show that somebody is helped much, in the fight of his ascesis, by running away from and by putting a distance between him and the causes of the sin. WE must always fear the things which shame us by remembering them; and we must not trample on our conscience or to disregard our conscience. So, let's strive to bring our body into wilderness and let's make out body achieve the patience. But bigger than all of these, let's somebody strive, whenever he would be, to shun himself from the cause of the war, (for if this is the case, even if he is submitted to troubles, he will be fearless), lest, when some need occurs, he will fall because of his closeness to that<sup>663</sup>.

**Question:** Which is the beginning in the war against the sin, of him who has thrown form himself the whole scattering and who has entered the battle? And where the battle starts from?

**Answer:** It is fact known to everyone that the beginning of any battle against the sin and against the lust are the toils of the vigil and of the fasting. This last one, it especially is the beginning of the fight against the sin from within us. And the sign of the hatred against the sin and against lusting for the sin, within them who fight the unsees war, it is the fact that they start with fasting and after that they continue with taking vigil during night, and that helps the ascesis

### **About the Fasting and Taking of Vigil**

He who loves for the whole his life the union of this pair he will become the friend of the righteousness. As the resting of the stomach is the cause of all evil things and as the idleness of the sleep triggers the lust for fornication, likewise, the holy way of God and the foundation of all virtue are: the fasting, the

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<sup>662</sup> He becomes frivolous.

<sup>663</sup> We are going to give here another paragraph existing only in the Romanian translation from the year 1819: "We owe to guard on ourselves against this with the whole our heed: not to see the naked body of somebody, not even on our own, neither us to touch our limbs from beneath, nor to see them. This is because many by not taking heed at that, they fell of the Kingdom of Heavens. This is for they ended to have as habit such an ugly thing and they couldn't get rid of that anymore".

taking of vigil, and the watchfulness into the serving (the liturgy) of God, into the crucifixion of the body for the whole day and night, which is opposite to the sweetness of the sleep. The fasting is the defender of all virtue and it is the beginning of the asceticism. The fasting is the crown of them who restrain on themselves and it is the beauty of the virginity and of the holiness; the fasting is the shininess of the righteousness and it is the beginning of the way of the Christian living; the fasting is the mother of the prayer and it is the spring of the sapience; the fasting is the teacher of the appeasement and it is the forerunner of all the good deeds.

So, when somebody wants to fast, he wants to reach the dialogue with God in his cogitation. This is for the fasting body won't endure to sleep into his beddings for the whole night. When the seal of the fasting has been imprinted into the mouth of the man, his thought will be crossed through by pricking and out of his heart will spring the prayer, and on his face will be laid down the sadness; then his dirty thoughts will stay far from him, in his eyes one won't see gladness, and he will be the enemy of the vain meetings. Never has been seen a man fasting with right-reckoning as being enslaved by the lust of the sin. The great road towards any good thing it is the fasting with right-reckoning (with discernment). And he who doesn't take care of fasting he will be shaken of all good. This is for this is the commandment given to our nature since the very beginning, as to guard itself against the delectation of the tasting; and with that our nature has taken its beginning. On the other hand, out of the first transgression, they who fear God have taken their beginning they who live in asceticism, who have started to guard God's laws.

And when our Savior showed on Himself within world at River Jordan, he stared from here. This is for, after His Baptism, the Ghost took Him into wilderness and He fasted there for forty days and for forty nights. Likewise, all of them who get out in order to follow Him, they set the beginning of their asceticism on this foundation. This is for the fasting is a weapon crafted by God. And who among those who disregard it won't be condemned? And if He who gave the law fasted, who among those who guard the law must not fast?

That's why, until then the mankind didn't know the victory, neither the devil felt the defeat from our nature. But through this weapon the devil got weakened from the beginning.

And our Lord was the leader and the first winner of the victory, in order Him to place the first crown on the head of our nature. When the devil sees some of the man dressed up with this weapon, the enemy and the tyrant get immediately scared and he reminds the defeat brought upon him by the Savior into wilderness, and his power get broken and he is burnt by seeing this weapon give us by the Leader of our fight. What weapon is more powerful than the fasting? And what else gives our heart more daring in the battle against the ghosts of the evilness, than the hunger one endures for Christ?

This is for the more the body gets tired and suffers during the time which the army of the devils surrounds the man, as much help his heart receives out of the hope for victory. And he who puts on the coat of the fasting he will burn with zeal all the time. This is for, the zealous Elijah too, when he was burning with zeal for the law of God, he was living into the work of the fasting. This is for on him who has gained this weapon, it will make him remember the commandments of the Ghost and the fasting is the mediator between the old law and the grace given us by Christ<sup>664</sup>.

And he who gets lazy in fasting he will be made drowsy and idle and weak in all the other battles and he will show the beginning and the evil sign of the drowsiness of his soul and he will give the possibility of being defeated by his enemy. This is because of entering his fight while naked and unarmed; and it is obvious that he will leave the fight without victory. This is because his limbs haven't been dressed up into the warmth of the hunger brought by fasting<sup>665</sup>. This is the power of the fasting. And he who perseveres in fasting, he will have his cogitations steadfast and ready to face and to bring down the evil passions.

They say about many disciples that in the day previous to that day which they were to receive the crown of their

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<sup>664</sup> "Mose received the tablets of the law written on Mount Sinai, while he was fasting. And the Savior of everybody started preaching the law of the grace after He fasted for forty days into wilderness. That's why, the fasting is the mediator between the old law and the law of the grace. This is for each of these have been given as preceding and as mediating the fasting". The fasting thins up the nature of the flesh and it strengthens the ghost within man, and by that the man enters the connection with God Who is Ghost. Or, the fasting makes the man transparent to the world of the Ghost and a good mediator of the Ghost.

<sup>665</sup> He who is fasting he will overwhelm the weakness of his body with the warmth of his zeal towards restraint, and no sin will be able to get closer to his soul and to his body.



martyrdom in, if they knew that, or if that was unveiled to them, or out of the story told by some of their companions, during the night they didn't eat anything, but they stood in prayer from evening to the next morning, extolling God in psalms and in praises and in spiritual songs, and they were waiting for that moment with joy and with gladness, like those who prepare on themselves for a wedding, and they were waiting for meeting the sword with their fasting. Therefore, us too, who are called to the unseen martyrdom, in order for us to receive the crowns of the holiness, let's take vigil and let's never give, in any of our limbs or in any of the parts of our body, to our enemies any sign of rejection (of Christ).

**Question:** How are there some people, on occasions quite numerous, who might have these deeds but they still do not feel the quietude and the resting from passions, neither they feel the peace of their thoughts?

**Answer:** The passions hidden within souls cannot be healed, brother, only with bodily toils, neither they stop their thoughts they who constantly watch their senses. These toils guard the man against his passions, so that him not to be defeated by their passions or by the war wages them by the devil. But they do not bestow the quietude and the peace of the soul. This is because the deeds and the toils bestow the dispassion to the soul and they kill the passions formed on earth and they bring the resting of the thoughts only when we will be imparted with the quietude; only when the outside senses get rid of disturbance and they persevere for a certain time in working the wisdom. This is because the man, as long as he avoids meeting the people and as long as his limbs avoid the overflowing of the thoughts within them and they are gathered into themselves, the man cannot know his passion. This is for the appeasement, as Saint Basil said, it is the beginning of the soul's cleaning. This is for, when the external limbs stop working the external work and they stop from the scattering into the external world, the cogitation will turn back from its wasting and scatterings and it gets appeased in itself and the heater wakes up to search what comes from outside the soul. And if the man perseveres well into these things, he will start gradually to walk the way of the cleaning of his soul.

**Question:** So, cannot one clean his soul by living outside the door?

**Answer:** Does ever get withered that root of the tree that is daily watered? Or, does it even get diminished the content of the vessel which you fill it in daily? And if the cleanness means nothing else but to forget about the free living and getting out of its habit, how and when will one clean his soul if he renews through his deeds, within himself, or within others, through senses, the memory of the past habit, which is the knowledge by living of the sin? When could one clean his soul by doing that? Or, when will he get appeased from the external wars, in order him to be able to see on himself? This is because, if the heart gets defiled daily, when will the heart be cleaned up of its defilement? This is because, by living those, the heart cannot be cleaned not even against the external work. And all the more cannot him clean his heart while standing in the middle of the battle field and he hears on each day the ceaseless noises of war. And how dare he announce then peace to his soul?

But if he gets far from those, the stopping from them can gradually start resting the things from within. This is because, until he doesn't stop the upstream, the river won't get dry downstream. But when somebody reaches the quietude, his soul will be able to discern the passions and the soul will be able to examine his wisdom with understanding. Then the inward man will wake up to the deeds of the Ghost and the soul will feel daily that hidden wisdom that flourishes within his soul.

**Question:** Which are the closest and doubtless proof and signs, which somebody can feel out of, that he has started to see within himself the fruits hidden into his soul?

**Answer:** When somebody is found worthy of the gift of the many tears which spring out unforcedly. This is for the tears have been placed by cogitation as some border between the bodily realities and the spiritual realities, and between suffering and cleanness. Until somebody hasn't received this gift, his work will still be within the outside man and he won't fully feel the work of the hidden things of the spiritual man<sup>666</sup>. This is for, when somebody starts forsaking the bodily things of the present age and he crosses inside this border that is within the

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<sup>666</sup> Th tears are the sign that the man feels himself overwhelmed by the presence and by the work from on another plan, of the Holy Ghost. When the bridge for crossing from the cold, callous, and insensitive man regarding the heavenly realities, to that man who feels the godlike realities, for he has crossed to those.

nature, he will immediately reach this border of the tears. And from the first dwelling place of the hidden life (from its first level) these tears start and they will bring him to the consummation of the love for God. And the more he progresses, the more he will be enriched with the tears until he will drink them in his food and in his drink due to his much perseverance. And this is the doubtless sign that his cogitation has left this world and it has started feeling the spiritual world. And the more the man gets closer in his cogitation to this present world, the less tears he will have<sup>667</sup>. And when the cogitation will be totally deprived of these tears, that will be the sign that the man has buried on himself into his passions<sup>668</sup>.

### **About How to Discern the Tears**

There are some tears which burn; and there are tears which fatten up. Those tears coming out of pricking and out of the pious heart, for sins, they wither and burn the body, and often the leading part of the soul (the mind) feels the harm coming from these tears when they start flowing<sup>669</sup>. And in the first place, the man necessarily encounters this stage of his tears and through them it will be open to him a gate towards the second stage that is higher than the first stage. This is the country of the joy where the man receives the mercy. And these are the tears flowing out of understanding<sup>670</sup>. These tears

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<sup>667</sup> The moving of the man with his cogitation from this preoccupation with his body and with the present world, it can be known for his tears will start flowing. This is for the world of the Ghost which he moved at, it is the world of the love, and it is not a world of the abstract cogitation; the spiritual world is a world which God works in, in an unmediated manner, for God is the spring of the love. But when the man gets closer to the present material world (of the passions), the tears will get fewer. This is because the man gets souly withered. The living into the wonderful world of the Ghost it makes the man so emotional, with its love, so that out of the man start flowing ceaseless tears.

<sup>668</sup> The tears are a burial of the ghost within the body, or of the sensitive man widely open to the communion into love, into the egotistic prison, taking place a cover up of his transparency and a petrification of his souly sensitiveness, or better said spiritual sensitiveness, that is the sensitiveness of love for God and for his fellow humans. The passions mean a petrification of the heart.

<sup>669</sup> These are the tears of the pain for sins. These tears hurt the cogitation because of making it sad, and thus the cogitation won't be able to see the luminous meanings of the deeps of the mercy of God.

<sup>670</sup> The tears flowing out of an understanding that is both sight and feeling of the world of the Ghost; out of a feeling of the mercy of God and of the joy for His loving attention. These are tears fattening up with the new life inundating the soul out of God, while the first tears burnt

beautify and fatten up the body and the flow down unforcedly, by themselves. And they not only fatten up the man's body, as I said, but they also change the look of that man. "This is for, by getting the heart gladdened, the face flourishes, and when he is in sadness, the face gets gloomy" (Prov. 15: 13).

**Question:** Which is the resurrection of the soul, which the Apostle said about: "If you have wakened yourself up with Christ" (Col. 3: 1)?

**Answer:** BY saying, the Apostles: "God, the One Who said the light to lighten into darkness, Himself has illuminated our hearts" (2 Cor. 4: 6)<sup>671</sup>, he showed the resurrection of the soul, the getting out of the old state. We must understand this. Namely, there to occur the new man who has nothing from the former man, as it is said: "And I will give them new heart and new ghost" (Ezek. 36: 26). This is for then Christ take image within us through the Ghost of the wisdom and of the unveiling of His knowledge.

**Question:** What it, in short, the power of the deed of the appeasement?

**Answer:** The appeasement kills the external senses and it wake up the internal senses<sup>672</sup>. And the external living does the opposite to theses, it is wakes up the external senses and it kills the internal senses.

**Question:** Which is the cause of the views and of the unveilings, or of the fact that some people see, while others toil over their power and the sight doesn't work within them?

**Answer:** The causes of the views are numerous. Some of them are out of some oikonomia and out of the new grace. Others are towards comforting the helpless and towards encouraging and teaching them. First of all, the views are bestowed to the people, out of some oikonomia, for the mercy of God. And some of the views are bestowed, in most cases, according to three kinds of people: according to the simples

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the old life into sin. The first kind of tears are turned towards the past, in order to kill the past, while the second kind of tears are open towards the future which they inaugurate.

<sup>671</sup> God is for us above light, He is the apophatic (untold) darkness; but when God wants to enter the communication with us, out of that darkness of His there will spring up the light. And by that, God resurrects our soul. The living in the closeness to God it is the new life that is, in the same time, luminous light.

<sup>672</sup> The appeasement is not a simple stopping of any feeling, but in is there will be wakened up the inside senses which the world of the Ghost is perceived with. The appeasement is the wakening up of the soul to the love into God.

ones, according to those people who are overwhelmingly innocent, and according to those who are consummate and saint, or those who have a hot zeal for God and he has lost their hope into world and they consummately have rejected the world, and they have got far from inhabiting together with the people, and they have gone naked on the traces of God, but a fear for their loneliness comes to them, or they are in danger to die because of starvation, or because of some illness, or out of some tribulation or trouble, so that they are close to despair. So, the first cause is the comforting coming to some people like those, comforting not coming to them who overwhelmingly tire on themselves; the view is also the cleanness and the uncleanness of their conscience<sup>673</sup>.

The second cause doubtlessly is this: For somebody has a human comforting, or from something among the seen realities, he won't be given such comforting through views, except according to some *oikonomia* of the new grace. And our work is about hermits. And witness to what we have said it is one of the fathers who prayed for this and he heard: "Let it be enough to you the comforting from and the peaking to the people".

And somebody else who lived in this king of reclusion, when he was living that hermit life, he continuously enjoyed that comforting from the grace. But when he came closer to the world, he was looking for that usual comforting and because of not finding it, he prayed God to tell him the cause, by saying: "Isn't it for bishopric that the grace has gone from me?"<sup>674</sup>. And he was answered: "No, but because God takes care of them who live into wilderness and makes them worthy of such comforting". This is because of being impossible that people receive some seen comforting and him they receive that comforting, except by the hidden *oikonomia* of the said things, known only to Him Who governs these realities.

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<sup>673</sup> "The first cause is the cleanness and the uncleanness", it is missing from the Greek text but it is given in the Romanian translation from the year 1819. And in the Greek text it is given the following note: "The cleanness and the uncleanness, or the cleanness of the bodily passions, but not also of the passions of the soul and of the conscience; or the cleanness, but not that that is doubtless and consummate, or that one that is claimed to be, but it is not cleanness". This note that is given in the Romanian translation too, it shows that these words were in the Greek manuscript as well, but they were mistakenly omitted when the Greek text was printed.

<sup>674</sup> "He could tell this about himself, for, after he lives as a hermit, he became bishop of Nineveh". He had the grace of officiating the mysteries but he grace of the personal feeling of the work of God he didn't have it.

**Question:** Is it the same thing the view to the unveiling, or it isn't?

**Answer:** No, they differ from one another. The unveiling<sup>675</sup> is often used for both of them. This is for, by showing what is hidden, all the sight is called as unveiling. But the unveiling is not called as sight. This is because the unveiling is used for the knows realities, tasted and understood by the mind. But the view of any kind has an image, or a type, as it happens to the old ones, either in deep sleep, or in state of vigil. And sometimes it takes place in a limpid mode, while some other times it takes place as in a hallucination, without limpidness. That's why, even him who sees he often doesn't know whether he is sleeping or awake. The view make itself known also by hearing a voice, but on some occasions a certain type is seen too, and on some other times in a clearer mode like face to face. But the view and the speaking and the question and the encounter with it belong to some holy powers which are seen by the worthy one and which bring unveilings. Such showings are committed also in places which are desert and farer from people, there where the man has absolute need for those, by the fact that he has no help or comforting in those places. And the unveilings a felt or are received by the mind through its cleanness, but partaker to them are only those who are consummate and knowers.

**Question:** Which is the sign that somebody has reached the cleanness of his heart? And when the man knows that his heart has reached the cleanness?

**Answer:** When he sees all the people as good and no one appears to him as unclean or defiled, then he is truly clean in his heart. This is for, how would we fulfill the Apostles's word that asks us to reckon all the people with a sincere heart, as being they above us, it one doesn't reach that what was said: "That the clean eye won't see evil things" (Hab. 1: 13)!

**Question:** What the cleanness is?

**Answer:** The cleanness means forgetting the images of that knowledge contrary to nature, which are within world under nature. And the border of the liberation from these and of being outside them it is this: the coming back of the man to the initial simplicity and innocence of his nature, and being him reckoned as a child, but without the child's shortcomings.

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<sup>675</sup> The note at the Greek text is: "Maybe the view".

**Question:** But can one reach this stage?

**Answer:** Yes, it is possible. This is for some people reached this measure, as Abba Sisoës did, so that he was asking his disciple if he ate or not. And also, another among the fathers reached such simplicity and innocence, so that he misses only a little to be like the little children, so that he totally forgot about the realities from here; he even forgot whether he ate before receiving the Holy Impartation so that he went to be given the Holy Impartation if one of his disciples didn't stop him. And his disciples were bringing him, as on a little child, to be given the Holy Impartation. He was a child to the world but his soul was consummate towards God.

**Question:** What cogitation and occupation must have him who lives in ascesis, when he sits in quietude in his reclusion? And what must him work in order his mind not to occupy itself with vain thoughts?

**Answer:** You ask me about cogitation and occupation, on how a man makes on himself death in his monastic cell? Does the zealous and wakened up in his soul man, living for himself, any need for asking how must he live? This is because what else could be the occupation of the monk, in his monastic cell, then the crying? And what higher cogitation than this one can there be? This is for itself the monk's sitting into loneliness will teach him its likeness to a living into a tomb that keeps the monk far from the joy of the people. This is for his achievement is his crying and itself the name of his state urge him to that. This is for the word "monk" stands for "crying", namely sad in his heart. And all the saints were crying while living this world. And if the saints were crying and if their eyes were always full of tears until they left this world, who wouldn't cry? The monk's comforting is born out of crying. And if the consummate ones and the victory-bearers were crying, how could him who is full of wounds to stop crying? He who has on himself lying down before himself like a dead, and if he sees on himself as killed by sins, will he still need teaching what thought he could make his tears flowing? Your soul is killed by your sins and you soul is lying down before you and your soul means more to you than the whole world, and won't you need to cry? So, if we enter the quietude and if we persevere in it patiently, we will doubtlessly be able to remain into crying. That's why we must pray with a ceaseless cogitation to our Lord Him to bestow us the crying. This is for if we achieve this grace that is greater than the other

gifts (charismas) and that it overwhelms those, we will enter the cleanness. And when he will have entered the cleanness, the cleanness won't be ever taken away from us until our exit from this life.

Blessed are therefore, they who are clean in heart, for there is not time which they not to rejoice in, for this delectation of the tears, and in this they will always see our Lord<sup>676</sup>. And while still they have tears in their eyes, they are found worthy of seeing God's unveilings, in the height of their prayer, and there is no prayer without tears within them. And this is what our Lord says: "Blessed are they who cry, for they will be comforted" (Mt. 5: 4). This is for from crying one passes to the cleanness of his soul. That's why the Lord, by saying that they will be comforted, He didn't explain the meaning of the comforting. This is for, when the monk is found worthy of crossing through his tears the land of the passions, and to reach the plain of his soul's cleanness, he will be met by this comforting. So, if one passes from those which cause this one here<sup>677</sup>, in this one he will meet the comforting that is not here<sup>678</sup>.

So, you must understand that that mind that receives the comforting at the end of the crying, it is that comforting bestowed by God, through leanness, to them who cry. This is because one cannot cry ceaselessly as long as he still is disturbed by his passions<sup>679</sup>. So, this gift (this charisma) of the tears and of the crying is characteristic to the dispassionate. And if on one who cries and who mourns for a certain time his tears could not only to lead him to dispassion but also to totally erase his passions from his mind and to deliver his mind from the memories of the passions<sup>680</sup>, what should we say about those who have night and day this work into their knowledge (conscience)? But no one knows the help coming out of crying except they who have surrendered their soul to this work. All

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<sup>676</sup> Saint Isaac ties the cleanness of the heart and the seeing of God, to the tears. Only the tears as extreme repentance, can clean the heart of its sins; only the tears as supreme getting-emotional due to the love from God, only the tears can bestow the sight of God, or they spring out of that sight.

<sup>677</sup> From tears to cleanness.

<sup>678</sup> The cleanness is what one can achieve here, but the comforting comes from above, from the Ghost of the comforting.

<sup>679</sup> The passions are opposite to crying. This is for the clean and emotional (sic!) crying is the sign of the love. And the passions are the sign of the egotism.

<sup>680</sup> The tears erase even the memory of one's sins, through the overwhelming of the love of God being in those tears.



the saints wish this entrance. This is for, by tears, it will be opened to them the door to enter in the country of the comforting, which are imprinted in the all-good and savior traces of God, through unveilings<sup>681</sup>.

**Question:** Give the fact that there are some people who cannot ceaselessly cry because of the weakness of their body, what should they do for guarding their mind, in order the passion not to penetrate their mind when their mind is emptied of all things?

**Answer:** The passions won't be able to uprise themselves against the soul and they won't be able to disturb him who lives in ascesis, when his heart is emptied of the realities of the life, through the withdrawal that protects him against any scattering, if he doesn't allow to be himself caught by idleness and by the carelessness for the due things, especially if he occupied on himself with the thinking at what he reads in the godlike Scriptures, by examining their meanings, so that he remains undisturbed by passions. This is for, even if only those meanings shine within him, and if he progresses in understanding the godlike Scriptures, his vain-thoughts will run away from him and his mind will be able to detach on itself from desiring and from remembering its passions; and he won't be able to take heed at anything from this life due to the fact that he is elevated by the great pleasure provided him by this occupation with this understanding above these thoughts, due to the much appeasement into wilderness. This is because, by that, he forgets even about himself and even about his own nature and he becomes like a man besides himself, so that he doesn't remember anything about this age. He occupies on himself totally and especially with the aspects related to the glory of God and he thinks at those saying: "Glory to His godhead! Greta and wonderful are all His realities! He has elevated my humbleness at height. What great things He has made my soul worthy of occupying with!".

And by living into these wonderful things and by being him constantly in ecstasy (kidnapped) for them, he always gets drunk of them and he is like living that life from after the

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<sup>681</sup> Out of that darkness made by God totally inaccessible to us, we are met on the stage of the cleanness of passions, by the godlike powers and meanings and lights, which take some visible features in order us to be able to perceive them. Even the meaning perceived by us it is an image adopted by the ray that starts from the godlike darkness.

general resurrection. This is for the quietude collaborated very much with this grace<sup>682</sup>. Given the fact that the mind has found its place (content) and it wants to remain right into that, in that peace found by mind by appeasing on itself.

He moves on himself, therefore, together with these ones, toward remembering them<sup>683</sup> according to the level of his living. And by taking heed at the glory of the future ages and at the hope for the realities appointed to the righteous ones, realities which will move into God in the future life and in that new settlement into the initial state from the beginning of the Creation, he will no longer thing at and he will no longer remember about this world.

And when he gets drunk of these, he will be again removed from there, with his sight, to the realities of the present age, which he still is into, and he says with bewilderment: "Of, the deep of the richness and of the wisdom and of the knowledge and of the understanding and of the skillfulness and of the oikonomia of the unfollowed God<sup>684</sup>! How unsearched are His judgments and how unfollowed are His ways!" (Rom. 11: 33). This is for, if God has prepared another so wonderful age, in order Him to bring in that age all rational souls, and to keep them into the endless life, why did God firstly created this world and He broadened it and He enriched this world thus with the diverse multitude and with the multitude of the types and of the natures, and God has placed within it causes and substances and the fight and the resistances of the many passions? And what He has placed us for, in the beginning, into this world and He planted in this world with love His richness of life and he suddenly removes us from here by death and he preserves us after, and not for a little time, in insensitiveness and in motionlessness and he destroys our shapes and He spills out our juices and He mixes those juices

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<sup>682</sup> Nothing contributes so much to the grace of the seeing the godlike realities, as the quietude does it.

<sup>683</sup> Towards remembering the godlike realities, and those views which he had had before, and remembering of his desire for seeing those and of the beauty of the future life.

<sup>684</sup> One cannot see the traces of God without God revealing on Himself, by sending, out of His totally transcendent and unperceivable darkness, some of-power-creator and upholder and illuminating rays. He who sees those, by being drunk of the joy for what he sees, as a downpayment of the future life, he won't forget, though, that he sees those while he still is here. And this fills him up even with more bewilderment, for, while still being into body, he can see such wonders. And he also wonders also about the fact that he has achieved their sight by enduring so many troubles into the world and into his body.

up with the soil and He allows to be detached and melted down our composition and to flow until our composition will totally end to exist<sup>685</sup>?

And then, at that time decides by God into His all-worshipped wisdom, when He wish that, He will elevate us into another countenance, known only by Him, and he will bring us to another composition. This is hoped not only by us, the people, but it is hoped also by the angels themselves, who do not need this world, due to the fact that they are, by their wonderful nature, a little less than consummate; but the wait for out elevation from corruption; this is for, when the mankind will be elevated out of earth, the earth too will be renewed and the earth will get out of corruption<sup>686</sup>. This is because of being themselves impeded to enter, because of us. That's why the angels wait for the gate of the new age to get opened (to them too). This is for the creation of the angels will rest then, together with us, of the burden of the body existing within us<sup>687</sup>. This is for the Apostle says: "For also itself the creation waits for the unveiling of the sons of God, in order it to be liberated form the slavery of the corruption into the release of the glory of the sons of God" (Rom. 8: 21), after the full detachment of the present age from its composition, when our nature will be placed again into its initial composition.

And then he is elevated with his mind to the realities form before the foundation of this world, when there was no creation, neither sky, nor earth, neither angels, nor something of the passing realities. And he thinks at what God brought all of those like, at once, to existence, only by His benevolence. And

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<sup>685</sup> He asks why God created this full of troubles world, if we are destined to eternally live into that happy world. This question is rather rhetoric, for Saint Isaac Himself gave the answer throughout all his description: in order us to grow up spiritually, in order us to assimilate by our efforts that stature of full of consummation being into the Ghost. That's why God also broadened this world with so many types and natures, in order us to be able to grow up in a complex and multiple manner, by having as rich as possible experiences, by fighting diverse temptations. The insensitiveness, and the motionlessness will touch by death only our body, but not also our soul.

<sup>686</sup> In the same time with the renewal of our body from now, it will go out of the corruption state the earth too, which our bodies are made of. But also, the angels will be elevated through that, by no longer having to occupy themselves with us and with the world being now into a state of corruption, so that the angels will no longer mirror that in their conscience.

<sup>687</sup> The angels' participation to our existence and the help they which provide us with, and a relation with our burdened by body existence and a struggle for easing the impediments presented us by our body in the way of our salvation...

his mind descends again to the creatures of God and he looks at the wonderful things of God's creation and at the wisdom of God's creatures, and he says in awe: "Oh, wonder! How exceeding is God's oikonomia and taking-of-care, and how much stronger is God's power, than all His creatures! And what God brought like, out of inexistence to existence the whole creation, namely the countless multitude of the diverse things? And again, what God will break this wonderful creation like, again, and the hours and the years, and the connection between day and night, and the helping transformations of the year, and the diverse flowers of the earth, the all-beautiful buildings of the cities and the adorned palaces form within cities, and the nimble walk of the people and their tiring nature since their entrance into life to their exit? And what his wonderful order will be stopped like, suddenly, and there will come another age, and the memory of the first creation won't even ascend to the heart of somebody, and there will occur a great transformation and other thoughts and other memories<sup>688</sup>?

And the people's nature won't remember this world at all, neither will they remember their previous life. This is for their mind will be tied to the contemplation (looking at) that new state and it won't turn back again to the fight of the blood and of the body. This is for together with the change of this age, that future will come to existence suddenly. And then, every human being will say something like this: "Oh, mother, how you have been forgotten by your sons whom you gave birth to, and whom you made wise, and who have been gathered in a blink of an eye to another bosom and they have become true sons of the barren one, who has never given them birth!... Rejoice, you the barren who doesn't give birth to sons, for the earth has given them birth for you? (Isa. 54: 1).

And then he cogitates like one who has gone beside him (as in ecstasy) and he says: "I wonder how long will last this age? And when it will begin the future age? And for how long will last these dwelling places in their present countenance and for how long will our bodies remain mixed with the earth? And

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<sup>688</sup> It is about the memories in the sense of anamnesis, namely recalling what it was, due to the repetition in the same mode. This is for the memory of the life from here cannot be erased from the people's souls in the future life. But that memory won't bring together with it the pain for our committed sins, neither the trace of the sadness etc. This is for further on it is said: "It won't turn back again to the fight of the blood and of the body".

what will be that living like? And what will be the countenance like, which this nature will resurrect with? And what will be the way this nature will come to the second creation?”.

And as he cogitates at these aspects there falls upon him an ecstasy and a kidnapping and a peaceful silence, and on that moment, he stands up and he bows his knees and he raises doxologies with many tears, to God Who is The Only One Wise and Who is extolled in His all-wise deeds.

Blessed is him who has been found worthy of this day. Blesses is him who cogitates day and night at these, for all his life. And if at the beginning of his appeasement the man doesn't feel the power of such views, because of the scattering of his mind, and he cannot see the powers of the mentioned wonderful deeds of God<sup>689</sup>, let him not get idle and let him not leave the place of his peaceful living. This is for the sower doesn't see together with the seed he sows the wheatears in the same time. And after sowing there will follow the drowsiness and the tiredness and the pain in his limbs and the going out of the relationships with his friends and the parting with the usual things. But after he has suffered all of these there will come another time, which the worker will be sweetened in and he will jump up and he will rejoice. And what will that time be? When he will eat the bread of his sweat and his cogitation will remain guarded into quietude. This is for the full of patience quietude and the mentioned cogitation from within it, they move within heart with much and endless pleasure and it pushes the mind towards untold awe (kidnapping). And blessed is him who perseveres in that, for before him has been opened this of-godhead-gushing spring, and he has been able to drink out of it, and he won't stop drinking out of it ever and always, on any moment during day and night, until the end and the edge of the whole his earthly life.

**Question:** In what it is shown the content of all the toils of this work, or of the appeasement, out of which one to be able to find out when reaching it, that he has reached the consummation of his living?

**Answer:** In the fact that he has been found worthy of persevering into prayer. This is for, when one has reached that, he has reached the end of all virtues and he has become dwelling place to the Holy Ghost. This is because, if somebody

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<sup>689</sup> The deeds of God are words addressed to us.

hasn't received in a doubtless manner the grace of the Comforter, he won't be able to consummate his perseverance in this prayer. This is for, when the Ghost is dwelling, he says, within someone among people, that one won't cease praying. This is for Himself the Ghost prays always (Rom. 8: 26)<sup>690</sup>. Then, neither when he sleeps, nor when he is awake, the prayer won't be interrupted within his soul. But either he eats, or he drinks, either he sleeps, or he works on something, and even in the deep sleep, there sprout out the good fragrances and the breaths of the prayer within his heart<sup>691</sup>, effortlessly. And the prayer will no longer be separated ever from him, but during all his days and hours, even when this one gets appeased outside him<sup>692</sup>, he continues liturgizing it within himself in a hidden manner. This is for the silence of the clean ones it is prayer, says somebody among the bearers of Christ<sup>693</sup>. The movement of the heart and of the clean cogitation are gentle voices, which the heart sings hiddenly in, to the hidden One<sup>694</sup>.

**Question:** What the spiritual prayer is? How can be found worthy of it him who lives in asceticism?

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<sup>690</sup> The Ghost is the Ghost of the prayer. This is for He keeps us in connection to God. When we have the Ghost, we are unable not to think at God. So, the prayer is the sure sign of the Ghost's dwelling within man's heart. Themselves the heart's movements are voices, are words. This is for the spiritual movement isn't but a voice towards God, an answer to His words.

<sup>691</sup> That prayer that doesn't get interrupted even during sleep, it is like an uninterrupted breathing. Within him who has accustomed on himself to unite his prayer with his breath, this union remains also when he doesn't intentionally focus on it. The prayer imprints him a state of kindness within his entire being. That is a kindness that is spread around as a good fragrance. That is a fragrance of the cleanness.

<sup>692</sup> By this he understands, I think, a prayer that gets spread peacefully, through silence, outside him. This is for in the next phrase he speaks about silence.

<sup>693</sup> The thoughts of the clean man who has emptied on himself of all egotistical thoughts, are godlike movements. He has become the subject of the godlike movements. Or, the godlike movements have been imprinted into his movements. The godlike movement into the man's conscience take the shape of the clean and kind thoughts. But of some thoughts which are prayer. This is for those are constantly directed towards God. "Yours, out of Yours". Out of the above-understanding darkness of God there come rays which, within the conscious soul of the man, made in the image of God, they become thoughts referring to God and to God's deeds, with thanks and with praise. The teaching of the uncreated divine energies appears here in plain clarity. This teaching is involved in understanding the unseparated connection between God and creatures and, more specific, between the godlike Ghost and the human ghost. The human being has actualized the theandric character. The God's energies, by becoming meaning within man, they turn back towards God as prayer of praise.

<sup>694</sup> The man speaks even when being silent. And if the man is clean, he will speak to God in profoundness. And this prayer is the work of the Holy Ghost as connection to God.

**Answer:** The souly movements are imparted with the work of the Holy Ghost through their full cleanness<sup>695</sup>. But only one in ten thousand of people is found worthy of it, for it is a mystery of the future living<sup>696</sup>. This is for that one is elevated and his nature remains unworked by any movement or memory of the realities from here. And he doesn't pray into prayer, but his soul has the feeling of the spiritual realities of that future age which overwhelm the people's understanding, and which we understand through the power of the Holy Ghost. This is the thought sight and movement, and it is not<sup>697</sup> an ask of the prayer. But it has started out of prayer. This is for that's why some of those reached their consummation. And there is no instance which their most inner movement is not in prayer on, as I said before. And when the Holy Ghost comes, He always finds them praying. And the Holy Ghost gets them out of this prayer into sight (contemplation) that is called as spiritual sight. This is for they no longer need the way of the prayer, neither they need to attend the Liturgy and its level. It suffices to them to remember God and they will immediately be enslaved by God's love. Still, they don't disregard the prayer to the end of their life, but they honor the prayer and they stand up at the appointed hours, in addition to the ceaseless prayer<sup>698</sup>.

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<sup>695</sup> The soul's movement are, at their turn, feelings which take the shape of words. When the soul is clean, the mind won't think at anything else except at the clean and infinite God. But by that, Himself the Ghost is working within them. The limited ones are for the body, are for the earthly and sometimes egotistical life, because they can be comprised and used for the limited and foreign to God life. The Ghost will come only where the soul is widened by thinking at God and so the soul enters the communion with God's infinity through that prayer that is clean of limited thoughts.

<sup>696</sup> In the future live we will no longer look except to The Infinite One, so that we will be in cleanness and in prayer, far from any limitative egotism. There we will consummately be into the Ghost of the communion with God.

<sup>697</sup> This "not" is missing from the Greek text, but it is given in the Romanian translation from the year 1819, and it corresponds to the meaning of this paragraph that reckons that seeing the godlike realities is superior to prayer. The Romanian translation from back then, they not only new the Greek language to perfection, but they also had a high theology. The newer Romanian text, typewritten, it didn't catch this nuance and it remained faithful to the Greek text. It is a more poetical text but it has less understanding of the spiritual meaning of the Greek text. That's why it is also a freer text. The "thought movement" is "thought sight", or understanding sight. It is not a simple movement of the thoughts, but it is a movement of that plan that is beyond the created world, into God.

<sup>698</sup> They who are elevated out of the ceaseless prayer up to "sight" are not elevated forever, but only from time to time. Out of that "sight" the always come back to the ceaseless prayer.

I saw the Great Anthony<sup>699</sup> standing at prayer since the ninth hour (three o'clock in the evening", when he felt his mind elevated. And another among the fathers, by stretching his hands while he was sitting at prayer, he entered an ecstasy that lasted for four days. And many others, when they were praying thus, they were enslaved by the much (deep) remembrance of God, by His love, and they reached into ecstasy. But the man will be found worthy of this state when he disrobed on himself of his inward witness and of his external witness of the contrary sins, by keeping God's commandments. When somebody guards these commandments and he uses them as due, it will necessarily happen to him to get out of the many human things, namely to disrobe his body and to reach outside - to say it that way - not to his nature, but outside his needs. This is for him who lives in the way the Law Giver did and he fulfills His commandments, it will be impossible him to remain with his sins within himself. That's why our Lord promised us that he will make a dwelling place within him who has kept His commandments.

**Question:** When does somebody reach the consummation of the many fruits of the Ghost?

**Answer:** When he will be found worthy of the consummate love of God.

**Question:** And what he knows out of, that he has reached that?

**Answer:** When the remembrance of God moves within his cogitation, hid heart immediately starts moving into the love of God and his eyes abundantly shed tears. This is for it is the custom of the love to soak in tears the memory of the beloved ones. And if the man is so, he won't ever lack his tears, for there are not shortage of reasons to bring the man to the remembrance of God. This is for it is the custom of the love to do such things. And this is the consummation of the people in this present live of theirs.

**Question:** If after much tiredness and toil and asceticism done by the man, the thought of the pride cheekily attacked him, taking its occasion out of the beauty of his virtues, and he

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<sup>699</sup> "Anthony, surnames The Great, whose life was written by the godlike Athanasius, passed away in the year of salvation 357 (Fabricius, in the volume II, p. 344, from "Bibliotheca graeca"). And Isaac the Syrian lives around the year 534. So, how could he say: "I was Saint Anthony"? Either he speaks about another Anthony, or by saying "I saw him" he doesn't mean he saw him with his eyes by that he "heard or received about Saint Anthony".



valued the tiredness that he has been enduring, what would he master this thought of his by, and what would he achieve through steadfastness to his soul, in order him not to believe that proud thought is his?

**Answer:** When one knows that the man falls off God as a withered leaf fall of the tree, he will know the power of his soul<sup>700</sup>. If he had achieved these virtues and if he had endured the fight for the virtues by his own power, while the Lord had kept His help far from him, and if the Lord had let him enter the fight with the devil and the Lord hadn't helped him as He usually helps them who wage war to the devil, his power would have been shown, better said his defeat and helplessness. But God's taking-of-care is always with the saints, guarding and strengthening them. And by God's power everyone is victorious when he reaches the toil of the martyrdom and the sufferings for martyrdom, and the other difficulties coming upon him for God and he endured those for God. And this is an obvious and proved thing, doubtlessly. This is because, what can the nature defeat like, the power of the thoughts constantly moving within the people's limbs, which can sadden them and totally defeat them? And like other desire and they love the victory but they cannot have it, when they are powerfully warred, but they are daily defeated by their thoughts and they are pained and they are crying and they are toiling for their souls, and you think you that can bear on your own the hardships of your body, which are so burdening, and not to feel your body too distressed? And how could the body, which is suffering, to face the sharp edge of the iron and to endure the breaking of his bones and all sort of torments, and not to be defeated by sufferings him who is unable to endure even to be stung by a thorn under his nail, and he doesn't feel these torments according to the custom of his nature, but there is added another power that is outside nature's power that stooped at him the strength of the torments? And for I have spoken about the talking-of-care from God, I think it won't be too much to remember also some story useful to our soul, which strengthen the man into his ascetic toils.

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<sup>700</sup> Better said, he will know how little power his soul has. He presents some cases which people were kidnapped from their state of prayer into ecstasy, which is a kidnapping into the contemplation of the love of God, or it is an overwhelming of theirs by the love they feel for God.

**Story:** A certain young man called Theodore was tormented in all his body, and when somebody asked him: "How have you felt the torments?" he asked: "I felt them in the beginning, but then after I have seen a certain young man weeping up the sweat of my torment and strengthening me and giving me the resting into my suffering". Oh, the mercies of God! How close it comes His grace to them who suffer in His name, in order they to joyfully endure the sufferings for Him!

Let yourself therefore not be ingrate towards the taking-of-care from God shown to you, man! If it is obvious that are not you the one who defeats, but you are only a tool, and the Lord is Him Who defeats in you and you receive the name as victorious only as a gift, who is impeding you to continually ask for this power and you to be victorious and you to be praised, but to confess on yourself to God? Haven't you heard, man, how many fighters have been falling off the height of their days (from their high living) since the foundation of the world, and they fall off the height of their fights, because they showed themselves and ingrate to this grace? And, as many and as diverse are the gifts from God bestowed to the mankind, as many are too the differences among them who receive the gifts from God, according to the measure of them who receive the gifts. And there is a smallness and there is a bigness in the gifts received by us from God. This is for though all the gifts are glorious and wonderful, one gift overwhelms another gift in glory and in honor. And a stage surpasses another stage. And consecrating on himself to God and living into virtue is, likewise, one of the great gifts (charismas) from Christ.

But many, by forgetting about this grace of being worthy to separate on themselves from the people and to worship God and to become partakers to and receivers of His gifts (charismas) and of being chosen and of being found worthy of the holy serving (of the liturgizing) to God, instead they to continuously give thanks to God with their mouths, the has fallen into pride and haughtiness. And they do not serve (liturgize) Him in clean living and in spiritual working, as ones who have received the gift of this holy serving (liturgy<sup>701</sup>), but they reckon on themselves as rather they would do a grace (a

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<sup>701</sup> The whole life lives in the service of God, or with the thought at God Who imprints that life with a certain seal of cleanness, by filing it up with the power of the Holy Ghost, or with His grace, it is a liturgy.

favor) to God, instead they to reckon that God has chosen them from among people and God has brought them close to Him in order they to know His mysteries. And while thinking as they do, they do not tremble with the whole their soul, especially when looking at those who cogitated like that previously to them, and how by that it was taken from those, at once, their worthiness and how the Lord cast them in a blink of an eye off the higher glory and honor, and how they deviated into uncleanness and into debauchery and into shameful deeds, in a beastly manner<sup>702</sup>. This was because they didn't know their power and they didn't remember ceaselessly about the grace given to them towards His holy serving (liturgizing), in order they to reach inside His Kingdom and there to live together with the angels and to advance towards Him through angelic living, so that God cast them off their work and, by changing their quietude life God showed them that it was not their the power to endure a well-ordered living, and of not being they disturbed by the nature's needs, or by the devils, or by the other resistances; but the power belonged to the grace that was working within them what the world cannot comprise or hear, because of their difficulty. That's why they endured within them for a long time without being defeated. There was within them, doubtlessly, a power that helped them in everything and that guarded them in all things. But because they forgot about this power, it was accomplished with them the word said by the Apostle: "Since they didn't want to have God, knowing Him as their Master Who united the dust with the spiritual serving (liturgy), God surrendered them to their unworthy mind and to the dishonor due to them which brought them to deceit" (Rom. 1: 28).

**Question:** Doesn't it happen to somebody, who dares to reject the living together with the people and to get out with a clean zeal into the uninhabited and scary wilderness, to die of

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<sup>702</sup> Our life has not fixity by itself, but it is constantly menaced to collapse into the precipice of the filthiness and of the indifference. We must hold and drive our life with a strong hand and with a sleepless conscience on the ascending way to the cleanness, by ceaselessly thinking at God Who wants us to see us ceaselessly bestowed to Him by ourselves, and us answering with clean love His clean love and His will us to show this clean love to our fellow humans too. That what helps us in doing so, it is to reckon this cleanness has as its spring and upholder the supreme Person, or better said the communion of supreme Persons, and not an impersonal and harsh law. Although you must reckon on yourself and owing to consecrate your life to God, you must also reckon on yourself in the same time, that only through God you can do that all the time.

starvation, or because of not having a shelter or other necessary things?

**Answer:** He Who has prepared shelters to the speechless beasts before creating them, and He took care of their needs, He won't overlook His creature, especially on them who fear Him and Who follow Him with simplicity and without spying. He who consecrated his will to God in all aspects, he won't ever worry of the things necessary to his body or of the needs and of the body's heavy sufferings, but he wants to persevere in his hidden living, and he wants to endure the humbleness life, as one who doesn't fear the troubles, but as one who reckons as pleasant and sweet the estrangement from the whole world, for the cleanness of his living, and he lives in ascetic toils in mountains and in forests; and he will become like one who wanders into the land of the speechless beasts, by not accepting to bodily rest on himself or to live that full of defilements life. And as one who surrenders on himself to his death, he constantly cries and prays, in order him not to be deprived of the clean living of God. And then he will receive help from God.

His to be the glory and the honor and Him to guard us into His cleanness and Him to sanctify us into the holiness of the grace of the Holy Ghost, towards the honor of His name, in order us to extoll His holy name into cleanness, forever and ever! Amen.

## Word LXXXVI

### On Diverse Themes. By Question and Answer

**Question:** Is it good to somebody to get far from all the things who arouse the passions? And is this running away reckoned as victory, or is it a defeat of the soul by running away from wars and by choosing the resting?

**Answer:** We are going to speak on these briefly. The monk must totally run away from everything that arouses within him the evil passions and he must fully cut off from him the causes of the passions and the matter, which help the passions and which increase the passions, even if they would be very small. And if the time comes to resist them and to fight them, let's do

that as well, and no playing with it but craftily. We must place as obstacle in front of them our contemplation of the spiritual realities, and we must turn our cogitation away from those back to the natural good placed by the Creator within nature, despite the fact that the devil has destroyed the truth from within man by experiencing the evil. And in order us to say why we ought to, he must run away not only from disturbance of the passions, but he even must sink his senses within his inward man and there him to persevere in a monastic manner into his full of patience work, in the vineyard of his heart, until his deeds will hiddenly and openly correspond to the name as monk. And maybe, in this perseverance in the vicinity of the inward man, we will fully be united with Him Who is known through our hope, with Christ Who inhabits us. This is for, when our mind monastically and reclusively, it remains in there, it is not our mind that fights the passions, but that is the grace. In addition to that, neither the passions move out of it towards deeds.

**Question:** If a man does something for the cleanness of his soul and the people around him do not understand his spiritual living, and so they get offended, must him leave his godlike living because those people get offended, or must he do what is beneficial to his purpose even if that is harmful to them who look as him?

**Answer:** We say also about this, if it is according to the law and with what he has received from the fathers who live before him, and if he does that for the cleanness of his mind, and that is the purpose he decided himself for, namely him to reach the cleanness, and other who do not know about that they get offended by his purpose, he won't be guilty, but those ones will be. This is for he doesn't restrain on himself, or he doesn't fast, or he doesn't isolate on himself, or he doesn't do what is useful to his purpose in order him to offend others, but he does all these things in his mind to get cleaned. And those ones, because of not knowing the purpose of his living, they defame him and they are guilty towards the truth. This is because of not being they able, because of their carelessness, to feel his spiritual purpose decided by him to himself towards cleaning his soul. About these ones the Blessed Paul wrote: "The word of the cross is insanity to the perishing ones" (1 Cor. 1: 18). So what? Because those ones reckoned the word of the cross as insanity, as ones who didn't feel the power of the word,

must the Apostle stop preaching it? But behold that even up to these days the theme of the cross is impediment and offense to the Jews and to the pagans. Will us stop speaking about its truth in order those not to get offended? Paul not even he didn't keep his silence, but he even shouted out, saying: "Let me not praise myself except with the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. 6: 14). With this praise "into cross" the saint wasn't bragging in order to offense others, but in order to preach that great power of the cross. So, also you, today, oh you holy one, you consummate your living on the purpose decided by you to yourself, in order you to reach God, a purpose which your conscience doesn't rebuke you for, and you examine your living into the light of the godlike Scriptures and of the writings of the Holy Fathers. And if you are not blamed by these ones, you won't fear those which others get offended by. This is because no man can convince everybody, neither can anybody to be pleasant to everybody and in the same time to work for God within his hidden.

Blessed is that monk who truly aims at the cleanness of his soul with the whole his strength and he walks on the thought way, which our fathers walked on, and he climbs the steps they climbed, him ascending step after step<sup>703</sup> and being elevated, as he advances on it, into wisdom and into enduring the troubles, but not on the foreign steps of the plots.

The cleanness of the soul is the first gift of our nature. And without the cleaning of the passions the soul won't be healed of the illnesses of the sin, neither the soul will gain the glory the soul has lost by disobedience. And if somebody is found worthy of cleanness, that is the health of his soul, right in the things he does his mind will receive joy into the feeling of the Ghost<sup>704</sup>. This is for he becomes son of God and brother of Christ and he no longer have time to feel the good things and the bad things coming in his way.

And<sup>705</sup> he who has the rule of his appeasement for a hour every seven weeks, or one hour a week, and after he

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<sup>703</sup> Here we have the idea of the ladder towards God, through virtues.

<sup>704</sup> Our nature was created, in the beginning, in cleanness. Our nature feels good, and unembarrassed, and in normalcy, into cleanness. Without cleanness the man feels himself souly ill. The cleanness is also a superior sensitiveness, feeling the presence and the work of the Holy Ghost, or it is an above-nature sensitiveness for God.

<sup>705</sup> From here to the end of this "Word" it misses the text from the Romanian translation from the year 1819, but it is given in the newer Romanian and Greek texts, typewritten. We can see

accomplished his program he meets and he mingles himself with the people and he doesn't take care of his brothers who are in troubles, if he reckons that he observes his weekly rule he will be unmerciful and harsh. And if it obvious that because of his mercilessness, of his self-appreciation, and of his liar thoughts, he won't descend himself to be partaker to such things.

He who despised him who is helpless, he won't even see light. And the day of his who turns his face away from him who is in need, it will be darkened. And the sons of the house of his who despises the voice of him who is in torment, they will grope in blindness. Let's not rebuke, because of our nescience, the great name of the appeasement. This is for any way of living has its own time, space, and kind. And only then it will be its work known or received by God. And outside these, it will be vain the work of all of them who take care of the measure of the consummation. He who expects his helplessness to be noticed and comforted by others, he has humbled on himself and he makes hi brother partaker to his toil, during the times which he is tempted in, in order his work to be with joy in his appeasement, by remaining far from any pride and far from any deceit from the devils.

It was said that someone among the saints, who was a knower, that nothing ca deliver the monk of the devil of the pride and nothing can help the monk in his steadfastness into righteousness, at the time of the ignition of the passion of the fornication, as it does that the visiting of the people laying down in their beddings and being exhausted by the pain in the bodies.

Great is the angelic deed of the appeasement, when it unites with it the right-reckoning on its measure, for the need for humbleness. This is because in what we do not know, in that we will be stolen and robbed. I have said these things, brothers, not in order us to disregard and to despise the work of the appeasement. This is because we are convinced everywhere about these things and we do not speak contradictorily to ourselves. Let no one take a word of our and get it out of context and keeping that word unwisely.

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again, that the text from the year 1819 was not translated using as source text the edition of Nicephorus Theotokis that was printed in the year 1770. Actually, this adding in the text of Theotokis is not so organically connected with the rest of this "Word".

I remember that I said in many places, with the intention of comforting, that even if it happened to somebody to stay in total idleness in his monastic cell, because of the forceful helplessness coming upon ourselves, he must not, because of that motif, him to decide to consummately go out of his monastic cell and him to reckon the external work as better than his work done inside his monastic cell. Do not reckon as consummate going out that one when, by occurring a need at a certain moment in time, you go out for a few weeks, for instance to buy the necessary things for the food and for the need of your neighbor. This is because we must not reckon this as laziness and non-working. And if somebody reckons within himself that he is consummate and that he is above all the realities from here by his perseverance near to God and by getting far from all the seen things, it will be good to him if he renounces even to that going out.

Great is the work of the right-reckoning to them who are helped by God. May God give us too to accomplish His word that says: "Anything you want the people to do to you, you do that likewise" (Lk. 6: 31). And where the man cannot fulfill in the seen things and with his body his love for his neighbor, it will suffice to God that love guarded only within out thought, for our neighbor, especially if it remains enough in its isolation and in its quietude and in its height. But is we are deprived of all the parts of that quietude, let's compensate its absence by the commandment that is next inferior to it, that is the seen deed, which we must commit as an accomplishment of the resting of our life on the purpose of mastering our body, in order our freedom not to be liar motif of our obedience to our body.

May God give us to know His will, so that we will always walk into it, and so we will reach His eternal resting, by the grace and by the love for people of our Lord Jesus Christ Who are due the glory and the honor and the worshipping, forever and in the endless ages. Amen!



**OF THE SAME**

# **ISAAC THE SYRIAN**

**EPISTLE I**

**Written towards a Certain Brother Who Loved the Quietude**

For I know you that you love the quietude, but the devil makes you stumble in many aspects, under the liar claim of the good, because the devil know the will of your cogitation and he scatters you away and he impedes the comprising virtue of many kinds of good things, of, my good brother, I want to help you, as a limb helps another limb which it is joined to, in your good desire, with a useful word. That's why I took care of showing you the things earned by me from the holy into virtue men and out of Scriptures and from the fathers and by my own experience.

If the man doesn't despise the honors and the dishonors and if he doesn't endure reproaches and mockery and losses for his quietude, or even beatings, and if he doesn't become a laughing stock and if he isn't reckoned as a crazy and distraught by them who see him, he won't be able to persevere in the pursuit of his good purpose of the appeasement. This is because, if the man opened once the door of the causes (of temptation), the devil wouldn't have any rest until bringing him, through many liar motives, to many and countless meetings. That's why, brother, if you purposely love the virtue of the appeasement, without scattering or deviations or interruptions, which the old fathers were victorious in, you will be able to fulfill your commendable desire when you will resemble to your fathers who love the consummate quietude and they didn't take care of occupying on themselves with their own resting, neither did they feel shame of running away from meeting those who were reckoned as honored.

And these ones were walking on their way and they didn't show on themselves to them who were wise and knowers, as despising their brothers, neither as overlooking their brothers,

or getting lazy, or as lacking the right-reckoning, as it said somebody among those who honored and defended their quietude and their withdrawal more than the meeting of people. "The man, he says, who learns by experience the sweetness of the quietude in his monastic cell, he won't avoid his neighbor because of despising him, but for the fruit he picks up from appeasement. How did, he says, Arsenius run, and he didn't search for the pleasure of meeting anyone?"

And Abba Theodore didn't run away from meetings, but meeting him it was like meeting a sword. He didn't salute anyone while he was outside his monastic cell. And Saint Arsenius didn't answer a word either to them who came to kneel before him. This is because, once, some of the father went to see Abba Arsenius and the old man opened the door because of thinking that it actually was his servant; and when he saw who he was, he threw himself on his face to the ground; and by being begged much to get up, by his visitor, and to bless his visitor in order than one to leave in peace, the saint answered him: "I won't get up until you will have left". And he did so. And this was done by the blessed Arsenius in order not to shake even hands with somebody and in order not to encourage them to come and see him again.

Take heed at the continuation of the word, in order not to say that for the unimportance of that one the saint despised him, or on somebody else, while the saint spoke to somebody else face to face. But he avoided everyone, small or big. He had in mind only one thing: to run away from meeting anyone, either big or small, for the sake of his appeasement, and to take upon him the reproach from everybody for the cherishing of his quietude and silence.

This is for we know that the blessed Theophilus – the archbishop – went to see him, having as companion also the judge of that country, for the honor they had for this saint and for their desire for seeing him. And when he sat next to them, he didn't thank them at all for the honor they did to him, namely he did not tell them any word, though they wanted to hear from him. And when the archbishop asked him to say a word, the monk kept his silence for a little while, and then he said: "And if I told you a word, would you keep it?". And he answered: "Yes!". So, the old man said them: "Where you hear that there is Arsenius, to not come close to that place". Have you seen the wonderful deed of the old man? Have you seen

what the old man avoided to see people like? He truly picked up the fruit of the quietude. And the blessed one didn't reckon that in front of him there was a man having worldly power and a head of the Church. But the blessed one reckoned that: "I have died once for all to the world. What can the dead man do for the living?". And Aba Makarios rebuked Abba Arsenius with a full of love reproach, saying: "Why are you running away from us?". And the old men defended himself with a wonderful and worthy to be praised defense: "God know that I love you, but I cannot be, in the same time, with God and with the people". And he didn't learn this wonderful knowledge from elsewhere, but from the godlike word that told him: "Arsenius, run away from people and you will be saved".

Let no man among those who waste their time and who love the meetings, to dare to shamelessly trample over these, by the corrupting craft of his words, and to say against those that they are a human contrivance made up because of the desire for quietude. Because this is a heavenly teaching.

And in order us not to reckon that he told that about the running away from the world, but not about the running away from the brothers, after he left the world and came to live into Lavra, he again prayer to God to tell him how could he live appropriately. "Lord, he said, show me how to be saved!". And he reckoned that he will hear something different. But he heard, for the second time, the same word of the Master: "Arsenius, run away, keep your silence, appease on yourself. For, if it is of great benefit seeing and talking to the brothers, you won't benefit as much from meeting than as from running away from them".

And thus, by receiving the blessed Arsenius, into godlike unveiling, while he was in the world when he was told to run away, and after that when he was living with the brothers, he was told the same thing, that convinced him that it was not enough to him to run away from the world but he had to run away from everyone. And who can oppose the godlike word?

But also, the godlike Anthony was told in godlike unveiling: "If you want to get appeased, you will leave not only for Thebaid, but for the most far wilderness". So, if God commands us to run away from everything and if God love the appeasement when those who love Him persevere in appeasement, who will bring liar motifs in order him to search for the meeting with and for the closeness to people? And if the

running away and the guarding were useful to Arsenius and to Anthony, how much beneficial will be those to the weak ones? And if on those ones, whose word and encounter and help are needed by the entire world, God honored them more for their living into quietude than for the help they could provide to their brothers, or even to the mankind, how much more will be this beneficial to him who cannot guard even on himself?

We know from another saint among saints that a brother of his was sick and he was in another monastic cell. And for the saints controlled his mercy during all the time the sickness of his brother lasted, and he didn't go to see his brother, when that brother was about to die, he sent him this word: "Despite you haven't come to see me until now, come so that I can see you, and I to leave this world, bet it even at night, so that I could; kiss you and get rest". And the blessed one didn't listen to that word, neither at that time, when the nature is used to suffer together with others and to cross over the border of the asceticism. But he said: "If I go out, I will no longer be clean in my heart in front of God. This is because, if I took care of visiting my spiritual brothers, I would cherish more the nature than on Christ". And that brother dies and he didn't see him.

So, let no one invoke as liar excuse for the idleness of his thoughts, by reckoning that it is impossible both to trample on his thoughts and to cease his appeasement, and so him to disregard the care God take of him. And if the saints defeated the so strong nature, and if Christ love His sons when they do not take care of one another because of cherishing the quietude, what other need can occur and being impossible to you to despise that need, when you fall into it? That commandment that says: "Lor your Lord God with the whole your heart and with the whole your soul and with the whole your thought" (Mt. 22: 37), it is greater than the whole world, and greater than the nature, and greater than all the nature's things. And that commandment is being fulfilled when you stay into your quietude. And that commandment speaking about the love for your neighbor is comprised inside this first commandment<sup>706</sup>. Do you want to gain the love of your neighbor, according to the evangelical commandment, within you? Get far from him and then will burn within you the flame of the love and you will

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<sup>706</sup> He who love God so much, he will love his neighbor too by teaching him how to love God and to be saved by doing so. And God loves all the people for all of them are His.

enjoy seeing him as seeing an angel of light<sup>707</sup>. And again, do you want them who love you to get thirsty of you? Look at their faces on the appointed days. But, truly, the experience of the teacher of everybody. And of our God are due the grace and the glory forever and ever! Amen.

## **Epistle II**

### **Towards a Brother According to Nature and According to Ghost, Who Was Urging Him and Who Was Begging Him by Letters to Come to See Him, despite that Brother Was Living within the World, for that Brother Was Thirsty of Seeing Him**

I am not strong as you reckon me, of, you the blessed one, you who might know my helplessness. So, my perdition it seems an easy thing to you, and therefore you constantly ask me, as one who is lit by nature, a think which I should not take care of and you should not desire it. Do not ask me to rest my body and my body's thought, of, my brother, but you rather should ask me to take care of the salvation of my soul. After a little more while, I will pass away from this century. How many faces won't I met there? And how many people and how many places will I see there until I will have been led to my place there? And how many reason and thought won't my soul receive by meeting those? And how much disturbance will my soul receive because of the passions rising up within it, if I give my soul a little resting?

These things are not known to you. This is for seeing the laymen harms the monks. And you too know this. And think at how much change will receive in his thought him who has been appeasing on himself for a long time into good, when he sits again in these things and he sees and he hears things opposite to his habit. If even meeting other monks it harms him who is in battle and who wages war to his enemy, when those monks

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<sup>707</sup> If you see clean into Christ, you will see your neighbor's mysterious light as undefiled by your passion for him. And the rays of your love for him will go towards him and they will help him without you being bodily close to him. It will happen into the major meaning of the word that what is called as "idealization" of him who is at distance, idealization expressed by the word "longing", which the Romanian language provides it with an infinite paradigm.

are not on the same way as he is, you think at what pit we fall in order to escape the pin of our enemy, especially us who have gained the knowledge by much experience. That's why, please do not ask me to do this needlessly. Let's not allow ourselves to be deluded by those who say "we won't be harmed by what we hear and by what we see, for we are equally much into wilderness and into world and into our monastic cell, through our thought, and we won't be disturbed out of our kindness, neither will us receive some evil change, nor will we feel – while meeting the persons and the things – the disturbance from the passions". They who say such things they do not know either they are hit and wounded. This is for we haven't reached yet that health of our soul. This is because we have stinky wounds and if they are left ever for a day, unattended and unbandaged and uncovered and untied, they will get full with worms.

### Epistle III

**Sent Him by Somebody Love by Him, Whom He Was Teaching about the Mysteries of the Appeasement; and about How Many People, because of Now Knowing those Mysteries, They Actually Get Lazi in this Wonderful Word; and about the Fact that Most of Them Received the Order in their Monastic Cells by Inheriting It, and that Order Continued among Monks; and with a Short Gathering of Word Dedicated to Describing the Quietude**

Bithier, because of being I forced by my duty to write you about the necessarily due things, I am making know to your love, in this letter, according to the promise I made you, that I found you as living into the doubtless living, walking into the order of the appeasement. Therefore, I am going to imprint into your memory, by a short word, what I have heard about this work form them who have the gift of the discernment, after I have taken into my mind the gathering of the words through a close examination upon them, which I got accustomed too, to the things themselves. I am going to send you these words of mine, in order you too, to help on yourself out of the words of this epistle, through the zeal that is within you.

This is for you must come close to the words gathered in this epistle of ours, with the understanding of the wisdom, in a way that differs from the usual reading, and you must take it as a light in the other readings of yours, for the much power hidden into it. By this you can learn what the sitting into quietude is like, and which is its work, and what mysteries are hidden into this work; also, for some people who cherish less the deeds of the virtues (of the righteousness) committed among people, and who give more importance to the lonely life and to the troubles and to the toils of him who appeases on himself on a chair<sup>708</sup>.

If you want to find, oh, my brother, the incorruptible life during your few days, let your entrance to quietude be with right-reckoning (with discernment). Try and understand this work, and do not aim to become famous; but enter, deepen yourself, toil, and strive to reach together with all the saints to know the deep and the height of this living. This is for each thing of the people has its way since the beginning to end, and it is expected a hope out of working each thing, a hope that moves the cogitation towards laying down the foundation of that thing. And this purpose strengthens the cogitation to endure its harshness and to take a comforting out of contemplating this purpose. And this purpose will dominate the mind as a master, until the end of that thing. So, also the honored thing of the appeasement becomes a shore of the mysteries for the penetrating look that takes heed at the initial cogitation among layers, until the consummation of the building and in all its big and difficult things.

As like the eyes of the helmsman which take heed at the stars, likewise the lonely monk by looking inside himself, he takes heed for the whole his travel, at the target he has fixed it in his mind on the first day which he started on traveling on the harsh sea of the appeasement, until he will find the pearl which he has been diving for, into the unreachable bosom of the quietude's sea<sup>709</sup>.

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<sup>708</sup> Committing the ceaseless prayer on a chair was practiced even back then (Century VI) and it didn't appear only in the Century XIII, through the "method" of Nicephorus from Loneliness.

<sup>709</sup> The quietude is reckoned as a mean for reaching a great deep, or a great height, as a shore of the mysteries, which one reaches by sailing on the "harsh sea" of the ascetic toils, in order to achieve that. The quietude is reckoned as a building built in layers, as an ascension to ever greater mysteries, to an ever-higher consummation. There is in it a movement of continuous

The guarding the hope it will ease him, from above, the difficulty of his work and the full of dangers harshness he meets during his travel. This is because, anyone who doesn't set up this purpose since the beginning of his work, in his mind, he will accomplish the due work recklessly, as one who punches the clouds. And one like this won't even be delivered from the ghost of the idleness for the whole his life<sup>710</sup>. And there will happen one of these two things: either he won't endure the difficult to endure burden and he will be defeated and he will totally leave the quietude, or he will persevere in quietude and he will make of his cell a prison and he will fry on himself like on a pan, because of not knowing how to trust the comforting that is born out of working the appeasement. That's why he neither can ask, with the pain of his heart, nor he can cry in his prayer, by desiring that. About these things, our fathers who were full of mercy and of love for their sons, they left in their writings some useful signs for the need of our life.

1) One of them said: "My gain out of quietude is this: when I do not get far from the house I sit it, my mind will be free of the preparation for war, and it turn back to a higher work".

2) Likewise, another: "I, he said, am running towards quietude, in order the verses of my reading and of my prayer to be sweetened to me. And when my tongue keeps its silence due to the pleasure of understanding those, I fall into a sleep, by the gathering of my senses and of my thoughts". And again: "When out of the getting far lives into quietude my heart gains the peace instead of the disturbance of my memories, the waves of the joy are sent to me out of the meanings which come inside, suddenly and unexpectedly, towards the delectation of my heart. And when those waves come closer to the ship of my soul, they sink my soul out of the words of the world and out of the words

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elevation or sinking, and not a petrification or an emptying of the spiritual life of any understanding. It might be rather a diving similar to that performed by a diver, into the 'sea of the quietude', but which, until reaching the deep bosom of this sea, into the 'sea of the quietude', he fights great impediments. But this "bosom" is unreachable", it is an abyss whose bottom won't ever be reached. It is the bosom of the non-understood understanding and of the unlimited love of the godhead.

<sup>710</sup> He who doesn't find the true and deep quietude, of who isn't upheld by the sure hope for finding it, he will continuously be menaced by boredom and by idleness in his ascetic toils for achieving that.



of the body into the true wonders, into that quietude into God”<sup>711</sup>.

3) And again, another said: “The quietude cuts off the liar motifs and the causes which renew the thoughts, and it weakens and it withers the memories of the bad habits<sup>712</sup>. And when these contents get weakened into thought, the mind returns to its order, by correcting them”.

4) Another said, again: “You will know the measures of the hidden realities of yours, out of the differences among your thoughts; the good ones belong to the ceaseless ones; the evil ones are moved by some happening and they pass by in an instant<sup>713</sup>. There is no body-bearer who doesn’t experience in his house these two kinds of changes, of the good one and of the bad ones. If he is zealous, the changes will be done from the small one towards the big ones, according to the nature (this is for the parents are parents to those who are born according to their nature); and if he is idle, from the height of the grace that has been place into our nature, as a dough, towards the lower ones<sup>714</sup>.

5) And another said: “Chose as your work of delectation the ceaseless vigil during nights, which all the fathers disrobed with the former man and they have been found worthy of the renewal of their mind. During those hours the soul feels the immortal life and in that light the soul disrobes the coat of the darkness and the soul receive the Holy Ghost”.

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<sup>711</sup> The deep meanings which are within quietude, they are intertwined with joy, for they are meanings of the love of God, of the life irradiating out of God. These full of joy meanings are itself the encounter with God. The meanings do not differ from (are the same with) the ocean of life and of love of God.

<sup>712</sup> The full of joy infinity of God, as met into quietude, it overwhelms the memory of the bad habit and it stops the renewal of the thoughts about the world.

<sup>713</sup> “We know the state of our soul out of our thoughts. Whether the thoughts of our heart are simple and clean, moving into a serene and undisturbed gladness, our soul is in good progress and it has daring towards God. But whether our thoughts are mirky and darkened by bitterness and are carries away by hatred towards our brothers, our soul feels condemned and despaired, because of being rebuked by our conscience”. If our thoughts express the continuity of the same godlike content, but in an ever-deeper manner, it is a sign that we are into quietude; but if there are thoughts which constantly change, and which bring to surface very different in essence thoughts, that will be a sign that we are in a superficial state.

<sup>714</sup> The grace is seen as a rising dough that changes our nature, by bringing it together it and by making it aa a bread for God and for our fellow humans. The zealous one experiences changes from the small aspects of the nature towards the great ones (from the less good ones towards the progressed-into-good ones). And the idle one experiences the changing from the ones of the grace towards the smaller ones.

6) And again, another said: “When somebody sees diverse views and he hears diverse voices, which differ from his spiritual cogitation, and he talks to those and he meets those, he won’t be able to hiddenly see on himself and to remember his sins, or to clean his thoughts and to take heed at the things coming upon him and to hiddenly talk through prayer”<sup>715</sup>.

7) And again: “It won’t be possible one to submit his senses under the mastery of his soul, if he is outside the quietude and outside the estrangement from people. This is because the understanding soul is hypostatical united with them (with the senses) and the soul will be unwillingly attracted together with his thoughts, if the man is not full of watchfulness in the hidden prayer”.

8) And again: “How much delectation brings within soul the vigil into the soul’s watchfulness, accompanied by the prayer and by the reading! And how much does that gladden, rejoice, and clean the soul! These things are known especially by those who during the whole their life live in the most detailed asceticism”.

So, you, man, who loves the quietude, place the urges and the advices of the father in front of you, as a target, and direct the course of your work towards getting closer to those. And before everything, you must learn what is in coherence with the target of your work. This is because outside these you won’t be able to have the knowledge of the truth. And you must strive to show in them, abundantly, your perseverance.

### **About Silence**

The silence is the mystery of the future age<sup>716</sup>. And the words are the tool of the present world. The man who fasts he

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<sup>715</sup> This one has come down from quietude through those view of many kinds. He no longer sees on himself, he doesn’t see his sins, he doesn’t get cleaned, and he no longer talks to God hiddenly into prayer.

<sup>716</sup> When you meet the future age, either here as downpayment, or after your death in fullness, you meet a world of mysteries, which the word cannot interpret. The words cut off the reality in pieces in order to be able to comprise it. Itself the reality from the present world appears in distinct, limited, according to the words’ images. There beyond, everything will be so united, they will so much pass one into another, for everything will be full of the infinite godhead, so that the limited words won’t be able to express anything satisfactorily. Then, this whole will be seen by everybody, so that there won’t be necessary a communication of it to one another.

tries to make his soul alike to the spiritual nature<sup>717</sup> by silence and by ceaseless fasting<sup>718</sup>. When the man parts with all things through his godlike work, persevering into his hidden, he will consummate on himself into these mysteries. And his holy serving (his liturgy) will be full of the godlike mysteries and of those unseen powers and of the holiness of the mastery and of the reigning over creatures<sup>719</sup>. So, the feeling of the passions is stollen from within soul by the sweetness of this view. And by this the soul enters the two stages of that unveiling known with the mind, which are in that plan from above this stage, in that one of the cleanness, and in the plan from above<sup>720</sup>. May God found us too, worthy of these things. Amen.

## Epistle IV

### Towards the Pious Father Simeon, the Wonder Doer<sup>721</sup>

Your epistle, you, the saint, it doesn't consist of written words, but you have depicted and you have shown in it your love for us, as in a mirror. And what you reckon us that we are like, you wrote so, showing through the deeds themselves that you love us overwhelmingly. What we should have written to

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There will be a common joy of what everyone will see, a joy being multiplied right by the fact that everybody will have that joy. It will be another form of communication.

<sup>717</sup> Namely to the angelic immaterial nature.

<sup>718</sup> The quietude and the silence from within itself are tightly united to the fasting and to the tears. That's why also the unveiling of the mysteries it is done them who are silence and fasting. The quietude is a means which the endlessness of the mysteries is perceived through, it is a sign of the perceiving of the mysteries, or the overwhelming by mysteries of the man's helplessness of expressing them. The quietude is the gate which God entered the man through, and which God reveals on Himself to the man through. Olivier Clément says: "The saint appears like a man who has lost his word, in the sense of discourse, or domination, of possession – and the saint find his word again through the mediation of the tears stream". "The Ghost is suddenly the breath bringing the word and the silence within heart". A word that doesn't come out of silence, a word that is not silence to itself, it has not profoundness (*Le visage intérieur*, p. 80-81).

<sup>719</sup> The mastery over creatures will be saint, for it will be gentle and full of awe for the mystery of the godhead which the creatures are transparent so that the godhead will be seen luminous through them, and it will be as it should have been on the basis of the godlike commandment from Paradise, if the man hadn't fallen.

<sup>720</sup> On the angelic stage known through cleanness, which they who appease on themselves become like angels through, and in the godlike stage that is above the angelic stage.

<sup>721</sup> "In alt manuscripts: *Epistle of Saint Isaac towards Abba Simeon from Caesarea*".

your piousness, and to ask you, in order us to learn the truth from you, if we take care of our salvation, you wrote that to us in advance, due to your great love for us.

You might have done this with the craftsmanship of the philosophy, in order that through your subtle and spiritual questions which you have addressed to me, my soul to be waken up from the indifference which my soul has sunk so deeply in. But I, through your love, which you have forgotten through of my measure, I am forgetting of my helplessness, so that I do not take heed at what I should to reach at, but I take heed at what your prayer can do. This is for, when I forget about my measure, you pray God through your prayers, in order your ask to be consummate and to be given to you from God (for me) what you have asked into prayer, as a true servant of His.

**Question:** The first question from your epistle is this: If one must keep all the commandments of the Lord, and if there isn't any way of salvation to him who doesn't keep the commandments.

**Answer:** About this fact, as it seems to us, one shouldn't even ask. This is because, even though the commandments are many, we owe to keep all of them. And if it hadn't been so, the Savior shouldn't have given those commandments. This is because, as it seems to me, our Master didn't say and didn't do anything superfluous. This is for the purpose of His coming was that of cleaning up from our souls the evilness of our first disobedience, and Him to change our soul according to the soul's initial state. That's why He has given us His of-life-maker commandments, as some cleaning medicines for our passionate state. This is for, what the medicines are for the ill body, that are the commandments to the passionate soul. And it is proven that the commandments have been given against the passions, as our Lord limpidly says to His holy disciples:

"He who has My commandments and he keeps them, that one is him who loves Me. And him who loves Me will be love by My Father. And I will love him and I will show Myself to him and We will come and We will make a dwelling place within him" (Jn. 14: 21). And again: "In this will know the world that you are My disciples, if you love on one another" (Jn. 13: 35). It is proven that one can gain the love according to eth health of his soul. And the soul cannot become healthy without keeping the commandments.

But the keeping of the commandments is lower than the spiritual love. And because there are many who keep the commandments because of their fear, or for the future reward, and not out of love, our Lord urges us much to keep those commandments of love, which bring the light to our soul. That's why, He says again: "In order the people to see your good deeds and to extoll your Fathers from heavens" (Mt. 5: 16). But it won't be possible to be seen within soul the good stages taught to us by our Lord, if one doesn't keep the commandments.

And about the fact that the commandments are not difficult to be kept by them who really want that, it was told us by the Lord Himself. For He says: "Come all of you who are tired and burdened and I will rest you. This is for My yoke is gentle and My burden is light" (Mt. 11: 28-30). And about the fact that we must keep all the commandments, our Lord commanded us that too, by saying: "He who transgresses one of these too small commandments and he teaches the people so, too small will he be called into the Kingdom of Heavens" (Mt. 5: 19). After all these things issued as laws towards our salvation, I cannot say that one must not keep all the commandments. But neither the soul himself won't be able to get cleaned up if the soul doesn't keep the commandments given us by our lord as medicines for cleaning the soul up of passions and of mistakes.

You know that the sin entered the man because of the man transgressing the commandments. So, it is obvious that, by keeping the commandments, the health will come again. And we mustn't even desire or hope for the cleanness of our body without us working the commandments, namely without us firstly walking that way that leads us to the cleaning of our soul. You must not say that God can bestow us the cleanness of the soul even without us working the commandments, namely only by grace. These judgments belong to our Lord and the Church doesn't teach us to inquire something like that.

This is because the Jews too, during their return from Babylon to Jerusalem, they traveled on the trodden way of the nature and so they came to their holy city and they saw our Lord's wonders. But Ezekiel was kidnapped above the nature, through the work of the unveiling, so that he came to Jerusalem, and by godlike unveiling he became seer of the future renewal. And it happens to some people to reach the cleanness of their soul on the trodden and lawful way of keeping the commandments in their much-tiring living, endured

to the blood. And there are others who are found worthy of it by the gift of the grace. And this is a wonderful thing, that we haven't been commanded to ask in our prayers that way bestowed through grace, and so to leave the living united with the work.

This is because to that rich man who asked our Lord: "How could I inherit the eternal life?", our Lord answered him: "keep the commandments!". And when the rich man asked about which the commandments are, our Lord answered him firstly to guard himself against evil deeds, and the He remembered him about the natural ones<sup>722</sup>. And when the rich man asked for finding out a little more, our Lord told him: "If you want to become consummate, sell your wealth and share it to the poor and take you cross and follow Me" (Mt. 19: 21). And this means: make yourself dead towards all your wealth and so you will live into Me. Get out of the old world of the passions and so you will enter the new world of the Ghost. Remove and disrobe from you that knowledge of many sorts and cunning, and so you will put on the simple knowledge of the truth. This is for, by telling him: "take your cross", our Lord taught him to die to all the realities from withing world. And when he has killed within himself the former man, of the passions, the Lord told him: "Come and follow Me" (Mt. 16: 24).

The former man cannot start walking of Christ's way, as the Blessed Paul said too: "The body and the blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, neither the corruption inherits the incorruptibility" (1 Cor. 15: 50). And again: "Disrobe the former man that is corrupted by lusts, and then you will be able to embrace the new man who is renewed through the knowledge likening to Him Who created him" (Eph. 4: 22). And again: "The earthly thought is enemy to God. This is because it doesn't obey God's law. And this is because of not even being able to. This is because they who are into body they cogitate the things of the body, and being pleasant to God into the thought of the Ghost they cannot" (Rom. 8: 7).

And you, the holy, if you love the cleanness of your heart and the spiritual thoughts as you have said, attach on yourself to the commandments of our Lord, as our Master said: "If you

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<sup>722</sup> Commandments against evil deeds: you shall not kill, you shall not fornicate, you shall not steal, you shall not bear liar witness; the natural things: honor you father and your mother and love your neighbor as on yourself (Mt. 1(; 18-19).

want to enter the life, you will guard the commandments” (Mt. 19: 17), for the love of Him Who has given us the commandments, either because your fear not to, or for reward. This is because we do not taste the sweetness being into righteousness when we do the righteousness, but when the desire for righteousness eats up our heart<sup>723</sup>. And we are sinners not when committing the sin, but when we do not hate the sin and when we do not repent for the sin. And you should not say that there was somebody, either among the ancients, or among the newer ones, who reached the cleanness of his heart while not keeping the commandments, and he was found worthy of the seeing of the Ghost, but, as it seems to us, no one who didn't keep the commandments walked on the tracks of the blessed apostles and neither was him found worthy of to be called as saint.

The Blesses Basil and the Blesse Gregory, whom you said about that they loved the wilderness and they were pillars and light to the Church, and they praised the quietude, they didn't come to quietude until they firstly became workers of the commandments, but they firstly live in peace and they kept the commandments, and so they reached the cleanness of their souls and they were found worthy of the seeing of the Ghost. I truly believe that they were keeping the commandments while living into cities, so that they accommodated strangers, they visited the sick, they dressed up the naked, they washed the feet of the tired; and if one asked them to walk with him for a mile distance, they walked two miles. And after they kept the commandments which were due to be fulfilled when they were living among many and so their mind started to rejoice of the first motionlessness<sup>724</sup> and of the godlike and mysterious views, they hurried up and the left for the quietude of the wilderness and they persevered there into the inward man, so that they became seers and the remained into the seeing of the Ghost

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<sup>723</sup> If doesn't suffice to only do the deeds of the virtues formally, externally, or because who know which earthly interests we would have, but we must do the deeds of the virtues due to our inward attachment to God, due to our love for Him, or alt least because we fear Him, or for the reward of the Kingdom of Heavens.

<sup>724</sup> Of the motionlessness from the beginning into God. But that motionlessness was on earth and not in heavens, as at the holy angels. The sin was committed on earth into bodies and not above in the state of the bodiless spirits. And the motionlessness from the beginning was only relatively a motionlessness. This is for our proto-parents too were to advance into God. This is for as well that mind gathered up into quietude, it has a certain advancing into God.

until they were called by grace to become shepherds of the Church of Christ.

And regarding what you said that the Great Basil praised once the living together with many, and on other occasion he praised the withdrawal, I am telling you this: "the zealous ones are truly found worthy of gain on two ways, each one according to his power and to his kind and to his target he has chosen. Sometime is beneficial to the strong ones to live together with many, while on some other times that is beneficial to the helpless too. And with the wilderness it happens alike. To him who is strengthened into the health of his soul, and whose mind has been united with the Ghost and he has become dead towards the human living, the cohabiting with many won't be harmful to him, if he watches on himself; and this is not for him to benefit, but in order others to benefit of him. This is for he has been called by God on behalf of the other fathers. And to him who is helpless, and who still needs to grow up through the deeds of the commandments, it will also be beneficial to him to inhabit together with many, until he will get accustomed to it and he will prepare himself and he will be warred up by temptations, in order him to fall and to get up again among many, and to him to gain the health to his soul. There is no little child not to be nourished with the flowing milk and there is no monk not needing to be nourished with the milk of the little children, in order him to overcome his passions and him to be found worthy of cleanness.

On the same way, as I said, the wilderness too, sometimes is beneficial to those helpless who run away (from the many), while on some other times it is beneficial to the strong one too. To the helpless the wilderness is beneficial for, by not being there present the matter of the sins, their passions will be burnt out and withered, and they to grow up; to the strong ones, for they being deprived of the matter, to be warred up by the enemy.

It truly so, as you said, the wilderness puts the passions to sleep. But one doesn't search only for that, namely to put his passions to sleep, but he also aims to uproot his passions. This means being able to defeat one's passions when his passions arise against him. This is for the sleeping passions wake up when there comes a certain cause that passes the passions into deed. But in order you to know that not only the wilderness puts the passions to sleep, as you said, thing at a time of



sickness, or of deep helplessness, when our passions do not wage us war harshly. But not only this puts our passions to sleep, but they also put one another to sleep, when they give room to one another. The passions of the vain-glory make the passions of the fornication to step back. And again, the passion of the fornication tames up the crazy love for vain-glory. So, we must search for wilderness not only because it puts our passions to sleep, but also for, due to the lack of the things submitted to the senses and by estranging on ourselves from everything, we will get wiser into wilderness and our inward man will grow up, namely that man of the Ghost of Christ, and on each moment, we will see on ourselves, and our mind will become watchful and the mind will guard on itself on each moment, lest will be stolen away from it the memory of its hope. These things, as it seems to us, are enough for your first question, whether they have been ever needed. Let's talk about your second question.

**Question:** If our Lord asked us to give alms for us to liken the glory of our Father from heavens, why the monks rather chose the quietude?

**Answer:** The answer is the following. It is good for you have brought an example from the Gospel, in order to examine the great living into quietude. We stay in it and we do not try to remove it, as a superfluous thing. Our Lord appointed the giving of alms towards our likeness to our heavenly Father, in order that to bring them who give alms closer to Him. This is true. But neither us the monks honor the quietude without honoring the giving of alms, but we try as much as we can to shun on ourselves from worry and disturbance. And not because we are against the needed things, when we come across to them, we want to avoid them, but we take care of our quietude in order us to remain occupied only with God. We avoid the disturbance as much as possible, in order us to get closer to Him. But if we ever come across to a real need of our brothers, for a while, we must not disregard the giving of alms either. Therefore, let's strive to be ceaselessly and always full of mercy within ourselves, for all the speaking nature. It commands us so the teaching of our Lord. This is the difference between our

quietude and our quietude cannot be whatever<sup>725</sup>. And not against our inward mercy must we shun of; but, when the time asks us for deeds and where there are needed things, we must not be lazy in showing our love in a seen manner. This is done especially by those who do not chose for themselves the consummate quietude, namely those who do not met anyone, but by those who fit their quietude to weeks program, and to that of the seven times seven<sup>726</sup>. Some monks like these do not refrain on themselves from accomplishing the things of the giving of alms to the neighbor, either when they are in the hours of their prayer program. This is for, where there is nobody too rashly or cruel or inhumane, he will keep his quietude also in the front of the eyes of another person<sup>727</sup>. This is because we know that without loving our neighbor, our mind won't be able to become enlightened into the godlike dialogue and love<sup>728</sup>.

This is because which wise monk, who has food and clothes and sees his neighbor hungry and thirsty and naked, he won't give his neighbor everything he has and he will spare something for himself? Or, again, seeing somebody who is made of the same flesh, being tormented by illness and weakened by pain and needing to be visited, he will cherish more, for his desire for quietude, his rule of locking himself up in his monastic cell, instead of choosing the love for his neighbor? And when such things do not happen, let's guard our love for and our mercy on our brothers, within our thought. But when we have the things at hand, God asks us, when needed, also to fulfill and to consummate our love and our mercy with our concrete deed. It is obvious, therefore, that if we didn't earn or gather anything, we wouldn't be ordered to fall to worry and into disturbance for the poor. But if we do, we will be required to do that. And again, if we avoid in our living the together-sitting and the mixing with the seeing of people, we won't need to leave our monastic cell and our lonely and withdrawn sitting,

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<sup>725</sup> The quietude of the Christian monk is not an indifference like that of the Buddhist monks, but it is full of mercy on people. But his trust in God is so great, that he has the firm hope that through it he will help those who are in trouble too.

<sup>726</sup> On each day of the week, they come and attend the seven praises. Soe monks do not choose for themselves the consummate quietude.

<sup>727</sup> Even while looking at someone else and helping that person, he won't lose his quietude, by getting disturbed. He will help his neighbor even with his quietude.

<sup>728</sup> In the dialogue with our neighbor, our mind will be enlightened by our dialogue with God. And in our dialogue with God, the man brings light out of his love for his neighbor.

in order us to surrender on ourselves to the walking through the world and to visiting the sick people, or to occupy on ourselves with other similar things. This is for, it is limpid that such things lower someone, form the height things to the small things.

But if somebody cohabits together with the many, and his dwelling place is close to people, and he is helped by others, or by other's toils, either in time of health or in time of sickness, he owes to do the same. He must not ask for help from others when se sees the brother of the same body in need, better said, he sees Christ cast out and tormented, and he mustn't avoid his brother in need or to hide himself form him, by motivating that he would do that for his liar appeasement. He who does that, he is a merciless man.

Do not mention here John of Thebaid and Arsenius and as who of those two bestowed on himself or he took care of sick people or of poor ones and thus he disregarded his appeasement? Do not touch the deed of such people. That is for, if you refrain on ourself from any help from people and for any encounters with people, as those two did, our Lord will allow you as well to not care about other people. But if you are far from that consummation, and in all your bodily toils you are constantly accompanied by people, why will you disregard the commandments that compel you to obey them according to your measure, giving as liar motif the great living of the saints, a living which you haven't yet come close to?

But I am not forgetting to remember you the word of Makarios the Great, a word that was recorded towards rebuking them who despise their brothers. This is for, the Great Makarios went once to visit a certain brother who was sick, and when the saint asked that man if he wanted something, that one answered that he wanted a little fresh bread, and that was because all the monks at that time cooked bread only once a year (for that was the habit of that place), and that worthy of happiness man immediately stood up and he left for Alexandira, despite he was ninety, and he exchanged the dry breads he brought in his sack for new breads, and he brought those fresh breads to that sick brother.

But also, Abba Agathon, who was alike the great saint mentioned before, he did an even greater thing, being him the most experience among all the monk at that time, and he honored the silence and the quietude more than anyone at that

time. This one, he left during the service (the Holy Liturgy) in order him to sell his manual work and he found in the market an overlooked and sick stranger, and he rented a house and the remained with that stranger in order to take care of him, and he worked with his hands for paying for him and for the stranger; and he was serving that stranger so, for six months until that stranger became healthy. Abba Agathon (as the history tells us) said: "I wanted to find a leper and to give my body to him and to take his body for me". This is the consummate love.

They who fear God, you my beloved one, they effortlessly strive to keep the commandments. And if they must escape other with their deed, they will take upon themselves any danger for the sake of those. He Who is of -life Maker, He tied their consummation and He made is depend on two commandments which comprise all the other commandments: the love for God and the love for God's creation, the love for God's image. And the first one accomplished the target of the seeing of the Ghost. And the second one is simple and non-composed, unsees and without any shortcoming by nature. That's why, in its occupation with God neither the conscience needs by nature bodily deeds or some work or thickened meanings. This is for this work of the conscience is simple and it is done by in sole part of the mind, according to the all-worshipped Cause, being a feeling above the feeling of the body. But in the last commandment, that is the love for people, according to the twofold composition of the people's nature, one must show his care for working the commandment in a twofold manner. This is for, what we fulfill in thought in an unseen manner we want to fulfill that into the body as well; but not only in a shown manner, but also in hidden. And what is committed through things we want to be committed likewise into conscience.

This is for, as the man has been made out of two parts, or soul and of body, likewise he must take care of all his things in a twofold manner, according to their twofold composition. And for the deed precedes the contemplation everywhere, it will be impossible to the man to ascent to the highest side if he doesn't fulfill, in the first place, the lower side with his deed. And no man dares to say about the deed of the loving of the neighbor that he fulfills that within his soul, while overlooking that part that one fulfills it according to his power through his body and while not lay his hand on material things appropriately to time

and place. This is for one will be believed only if his love from his thought can be seen and known. And when we show on ourselves as faithful and true in these things, according to our power, our soul will be given a power to stretch on himself also towards that big part of the high and godlike contemplation, through simple and different meanings<sup>729</sup>.

He wrote also that that monk who wants to love God more than all, he must take care of the cleanness of his soul. And you said that well, if you are capable of this too. But because you have said that that soul who hasn't defeated yet his passions, he won't have daring into his prayer, these two things seem to be contrary to one another, despite I am a simple man. This is for, if he hasn't defeated his passions yet, how will he take care of his cleanness? If, out of the law of the spiritual righteousness he hasn't fulfilled the defeating of the passions, how can you ask him for something even superior to that? But not out of the things one desires it can be known that fact that he loves those things, but it can be known out of the things he loves what he actually desires<sup>730</sup>. The love precedes the desire, by nature. If somebody doesn't love something, he won't desire that either. The passions are like a door locked on the face of the cleanness. And if somebody doesn't open this door, he won't enter the clean realm of the heart.

And when you have said that the soul has the daring in the time of the prayer, you said that rightly. This is for the daring is not only above passions, but the daring is also above the cleanness. And the law of the teaching is like I say: the forced patience fights the passions for cleanness. So, if you have defeated your passions, your soul will gain his cleanness. And the true cleanness makes the mind to gain the daring in time of prayer.

But won't we be worthy of condemnation if we ask in prayer for what we have called as cleanness? Or, isn't that a proof for our pride or for our self-appreciation, to ask God for what the godlike Scripture and our fathers command us, and

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<sup>729</sup> In the Greek text followed from here two pages which have been given in this book also in the content of the *Word LXXXVI*, and that's why we are going to omit them in this book.

<sup>730</sup> You cannot gain the cleanness by simply desiring it, or without fighting yourself for it by defeating your passions. This simple desire for cleanness, without actually the love for cleanness manifested in rejecting the passions which defile, it doesn't mean actually even desiring it. You must love the cleanness by rejecting the passions which defile you, and by that you will show what you actually desire.

which the monk left everything for, and have gone into wilderness? But I think, you the holy one, that like the son doesn't doubt his father and the son doesn't ask his father telling him: "Teach me the craftsmanship, or give me something", likewise must the monk not to become tired of asking from God: "Give me these and those". This is for the monk knows that God takes care of us as a father takes care of his son. And that's why we owe to get humble and to cry for the causes of our sins, even for those which are outside our will, either we have committed those without thought, or with our deed, and we to say with a crushed heart as the publican did: "Lord, be merciful to me, the sinner". And let's do hiddenly and plainly what our Lord told us to do: "When you have done all the things commanded to you, you will say that worthless servants we are; what we owe to do that we have done" (Lk. 18: 13). Your conscience must bear witness that you are unworthy and you need mercy<sup>731</sup>.

You know as well, that not the deeds open you that locked door from within your heart, but the crushed heart and the humbleness will do that, when you have defeated your passions into humbleness and not by contempt<sup>732</sup>. He who is sick he first gets humble and he takes care of healing on himself of his passions. And then he asks for seeing the emperor. This is for the souls' cleanness and healthy are the soul's kingdom.

And which is the kingdom of the soul? Like he who is sick he won't say to his father: "Make me emperor", but he firstly will take care of his sickness, and after his full recovery he will receive his kingdom from his father, likewise that sinner who repents he will firstly receive the health of his soul and then he will enter with his father the country of the clean nature and he will reign there into glory with his father.

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<sup>731</sup> Because the author of the letter said also that he doesn't have daring into prayer, for he has no cleanness, Saint Issaac told him that as the son doesn't ask his father for things known to his father that his son needs, likewise he who prayer he must daringly ask for nothing else but for his sins to be forgiven. This is not pride, On the contrary, this is the proof for the awareness of his sins in him who prays.

<sup>732</sup> Not your deeds which you can be proud of will open you the door of your heart, or the door of your heart to God, but themselves your crushed heart and your humbleness will open that door. But this will happen if you have defeated your passions in humbleness, and not with the despising pride provided you by doing the deeds contrary to your passions. Or, itself your crushed heart is a sign that you have defeated the worst of your passion, namely your pride, and together with your pride you have defeated all your passions.

We remember the Holy Apostle Paul who confesses his sins in the last part and further on unveils his soul: "Jesus Christ, he says, came within world to save the sinners, among whom I am the first. And that's why He had mercy on me to show His long-forbearance" (1 Tim. 1: 15). This is because I was in the beginning persecutor and blasphemer, but I have been given mercy, for I was working with nescience, out of my faithlessness.

When told he these and at what time? After his great toils and after his deeds of power, after preaching the Gospel of Christ that he took it all over the world, after the ceaseless deaths, after his troubles of many sorts, which he suffered from Jews and from other gentiles. But he was still looking at his deeds from the beginning. And not only that didn't reckon that he reached the cleanness, but he thought that he was not worthy to be counted among disciples. This was because he said: "I am not worthy to be called apostle, because I persecuted the Church of Christ: (1 Cor. 15: 9). And when he earned more than anybody the victory upon his passions, he was saying: "I oppress my body and I bear it enslaved, lest by preaching to others I myself to become unworthy" (1 Cor. 9: 27).

And if you say that in some places, he tells also the great things about himself, let himself explain that to you. For he said that he didn't do that willingly, neither through himself, but for preaching. And when he told those things towards the benefit of the believers, he said about himself that by praising on himself like he did, he was mindless, shouting out and saying: "You forced me" (2 Cor. 11: 17; 12: 12). And again: "I do not speak according to the Lord, but with lack of wisdom concerning the praise" (2 Cor. 11: 17).

Lo, this is the guidance brought us by Saint Paul the righteous. Let's apply it and let's aspire to fulfill it. And if we as God for the high things and God doesn't give us those, let's be content existing even without those. This is for God knows the vessels chosen for His serving. This is for the Blessed Paul neither after all those he didn't ask for the kingdom of the soul, but he said: "I would have wanted to be anathema from Christ" (Rom. 9: 3). So, how would we dare to ask, before the time known to God, the kingdom of the soul, since we haven't kept either the commandments, neither have we defeated our passions, nor have we paid our debt?

Therefore, I pray you, you the saint, your thought not to ascend to this, but you to earn, above all, the patience in the things coming upon you. And with great humbleness and with crushing of heart for our mistakes and for our thoughts, let's ask for the forgiveness of our sins and for the humbleness of our soul.

It was written by somebody among the saints that the prayer of him who doesn't reckon on himself as a sinner before God, it won't be well-received<sup>733</sup>. And if you say that some of the father wrote about these, namely about what the cleanness of the heart is and what the health is and what the righteousness is and what the souly sight is, we will answer you that they didn't wrote about those in order us to search for them or to wait for them before time. This is for it was written: "The Kingdom of God doesn't come as one that is waited for in order to be seen" (Lk. 17: 20). They who waited for it thus, they achieved pride and falling. We are searching for the place (the land) of the heart through the deeds of the repentance and of the living, which are well-pleasant to God, and the things of our Lord will come from those, if the place of the heart becomes clean and unstained<sup>734</sup>. And those height of God which we try to see them, are not approved by the Church. And they who have

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<sup>733</sup> That's why have been associate to the *Prayer to Jesus* also the request: "Have mercy on me the sinner", and not the asking for who knows what deeds. Without the conscience of one's sin there won't be humbleness but pride.

<sup>734</sup> It is here about those who waits for it as it would come as an external reality, and they also claim that they would know the signs of its coming. The most appropriate translation of the place from Luke 17: 20 could be also this: "The Kingdom of God doesn't come as one which one take heed at by waiting for it" (εν παρατηρήσει προσδοκίας). In this is hidden a pride claiming that it knows the closeness of the coming of what cannot actually know or waited for. Let's ceaselessly see our sins and let's repent for them, enduring the troubles. In this we live the closeness to us of the Kingdom of God. In this is implied the knowledge of our unimportance and of the greatness of God. In the humble feeling and in the deeds of the repentance we discover the endless deep of the world, and, in front of this deep, we discover the endless height of the glory of God. By doing so, all the things of God (humbleness, cleanness, love) will come by themselves. Then, the pride or any form of egotism will no longer stay as some stains on the transparent deep of our heart. Then the place of our heart will be clean and able to mirror, by receiving into it, the rays of the heavenly Sun. It seems that, by affirming here that the things of God come within our heart when our heart is clean, Saint Isaac is contradicting what he said before, that we must not ask for cleanness, but we must only cry with humbleness for our sins. But both here and above, he doesn't condemn the effort towards cleanness, but the claim of having the cleanness and of being us able to achieve it. One needs the cleanness for God to come within his heart. But we mustn't ever reckon that we have achieved the cleanness. Even the humble though that we are sinners, and therefore we still aren't humble enough, it is a sign of the cleanness.



received those they have achieved pride and falling. And they are not a sign that somebody loves God, but they are an illness of the soul. And how will we search for the high things of God, when the godlike Paul praises on himself with his troubles and he reckons that the high things of God consist of being imparted with the sufferings of Christ<sup>735</sup>?

Also, you have written in your epistle that your soul loved to love God, but you haven't reached to love God, despite you have much desire to love God; in addition to the fact that you desire to withdraw on yourself into wilderness, this has been shown also in the fact that it has started within you the cleanness of the heart and your heart gets warmed up.

If these things are true, that would be great, but I wouldn't have wanted you to write them down. This is because you wouldn't write them in a well-organized order. And if you have written those for asking about them, the order of the questions should have been different. This is because, he who says that his soul hasn't yet daring into prayer, because he hasn't defeated his passions yet, how could he dare to say that his soul loved to love God? There's no way one can set his soul in the motion of the love for God, a love which you secretly run after through your withdrawal, if he hasn't yet defeated his passions. But you have said that your soul hasn't defeated yet his passions, and your soul still love God. In these two there is a wrong stringing. This is because I cannot understand what tells him who affirms that he hasn't defeated his passions but he loves to love God.

But you say: "I haven't said that I love", but that "I love to love". But neither this could happen if the soul is not in cleanness. And if you want to say an empty-of-content word, that it is said not only by you, but everybody says that wants to love God. And not only the Christians, but this word is

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<sup>735</sup> Being shared with Christ, and with Christ's resurrected life, it consists of being shared with His sufferings. The troubles make this world transparent to God. And this gives us power to endure the troubles. The cross makes us feel the resurrected life of Christ, and the cross makes the world to become transparent to the high realities of God, to him who endures the cross. Or, the cross's transparency to God gives us the power for enduring the cross. The Kingdom of God won't be instituted in the frame of this world, at the end of this world, because this world cannot exist without enduring the cross. The Kingdom of God is in this world always within them who, by enduring the troubles, they discover their heart and, within heart, they discover the presence of the resurrected Christ. The troubles make the Kingdom of God transparent within this world, for they show that this world cannot have a duration and a meaning in itself.

characteristic to everyone. But in these words, only the tongue is moving, while the soul isn't feeling what it is being said. This is similar to the fact that many, while they are ill, they don't know that they are ill. And the evilness is an illness of the soul; and the straying when one loses the truth. And most of the people, by being sick with these, they pretend to be healthy and they are praised by many. This is because if the soul doesn't get healed of evilness, and if the soul doesn't become steadfast into his natural health which the soul has been created into, by being born out of the health of the Ghost, the man won't be able to lust for the above-nature realities. As long as the soul is into the illness of the passions, the soul won't feel the godlike realities with his feeling, neither will the soul know how to lust for those, but he lusts those only because he has heard about those by ear, or he has found out about those in writings. That's why, I rightly said above that they who desire the consummation they must keep all the commandments. This is for only the hidden work of the commandments will heal up the soul's power<sup>736</sup>. And this is not done simply or haphazardly. For it has been written that without the shedding of the blood there won't be forgiveness<sup>737</sup>.

First, our nature has received the renewal into the embodiment of Christ, and then our nature was imparted with His suffering and with His death and after the renewal through the shedding of the blood it has been renewed and sanctified

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<sup>736</sup> In working the commandments the soul gets strengthened, especially for in this work the soul is being helped by the power of the grace. By giving alms, your soul gets softened, and so you will get rid of the helplessness of the callousness. Praising other, you will get rid of the helplessness of the pride etc. This happens especially when you do not do the good only in order to be seen and appreciated by people. Only if this is the case, you will get rid of the helplessness of the pride. In fulfilling the commandments it is shown, therefore, the desire for loving on Christ, or the actual beginning of loving Him, and the growing up of this love. Otherwise, saying that you desire Christ it will be only an empty word. And anyone can praise with that.

<sup>737</sup> Christ shed His blood on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. But that didn't happen for a juridical satisfaction to be given to God's offended honor, but in order to show that that life that is full of Holy Ghost can be obtained through the thinning of one's body, through toils and sufferings. All of these are like some kind of shedding of blood, some kind of thinning of the blood of anything that make the blood to stick on the thick realities of the world. WE receive this power through the crucified body of Christ, through His thinned blood, namely through His shed blood. It is usually forgotten when one explains the Eucharist, that we aren't simply imparted with the blood of our Lord, but with our Lord's "shed" blood, or with His blood that is being "shed", in order that to give to our blood too, the power to be shed.

our nature too, and our nature has become able to receive the new and consummate commandments. This is because, if it had been given before the shedding of the blood, before our nature was renewed and sanctified, it could have been that these new commandments too, as the old commandments as well, they would have cut off from within soul our evilness but they wouldn't have been able to pluck off the itself root of the evilness, form within our soul. But now it is not such. But the hidden work that observed both the new and the old commandments, which are kept by our soul by the fear of God these commandments renew our soul and sanctify our soul and they heal all our soul's limbs in a hidden manner<sup>738</sup>. This is for, it is obvious which passion is healed by which commandment, within soul, in a peaceful manner. And the work (the energy) of those is felt both by him who heals and by him who is healed, in the likeness of that woman who was healed of her shedding of blood.

You know, my beloved one, that is the soul's passionate part was not healed and it was not renewed and sanctified hiddenly, and it was not hiddenly tied to the living into the Ghost, it would not achieve the health, neither it would be liberated from the troubles caused by the things which it comes across to, which are in creation. And the healing consists of becoming one, by grace, as the blessed apostle became, who became consummate into the love of Christ. And sometimes the soul receives his health according to the law. This is because he who by working the commandments and some harsher deeds of the true living, he has defeated his passions, you will know that he has achieved the health of his soul according to the law. And he has been weaned of that milk of the thickened way of this world, and the habituation to his previous thoughts it has been cut off from within him, and he has been born anew as in the beginning into the spiritual realities, and he has seen on

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<sup>738</sup> The "hidden work" of God without our soul it is related to the blood shed by Christ. This is for this blood is continuously shed within us through the Holy Impartation. And in this shed blood there isn't only the power of His human cleanness, but there is also the godlike power, for our cleanness. That's why we can work the new commandments which are much higher, which provide our nature with the power for renewal.

By receiving Christ's blood, we can fulfill even His spiritual commandments, which make our nature become spiritualized, and to be overwhelmed by the Ghost, dying to the former man and no longer searching for the need of the body. Between the fulfillment of these commandments and the shed blood of the Lord there is a tight connection.

himself, by grace, into the country of the Ghost through the meanings of his inward man and he has received into a new and non-composed world.

This is for, when the mind is renewed and when the heart is sanctified, all the good meanings moving within it according to the nature of this world, are set in movement. Firstly, it is moving in it the desire for the godlike realities and it desires the partaking (the communion) with the angels and the unveilings of the mysteries of the Ghost's knowledge. And his mind feels the spiritual knowledge of the creatures and in his mind will sprout out the sight the mysteries of the Holy Trinity, together with the mysteries of the new *oikonomia* (embodiment), and then the mind will be totally united with the knowledge of the hope for the future realities<sup>739</sup>.

You have to understand therefore, these things which I have written to you, as being yours. If your soul was truly able to love God when your soul still was locked into the land of the passions, it wouldn't need to ask for and to learn the mysteries of the Ghost. But it is proven that those learnings and that knowledge achieved in that state dominated by passions are useless to your soul, neither are those able to open to your soul the door of the cleaning. But if the passions are removed from upon the soul, the mind will be enlightened and it will be moved into that clean land of the nature and it won't need to ask anymore<sup>740</sup>. This is because the mind will limpidly see the good realities which are in that land of the mind. This is because our external senses do not feel the natures and the things happening within them by learning and asking, but each sense feels naturally and not by asking about the perceived things (because there isn't a teaching mediating between senses and the sensed things; this is because the blind, no matter how much one would talk to him about the shininess of the sun and or the moon and about the motion of the stars and about the sparks of the precious stoned, the blind will receive and he will

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<sup>739</sup> The mind will be totally united with the knowledge of the hope for the future realities, better said with those known only through hope. Now the mind has those within itself, or in connection with itself.

<sup>740</sup> We cannot say that in our nature there is a clean land differing from that defiled by passions. But the whole our nature will be moved into a state of cleanness, or in an area of cleanness, or it will gradually enter the plan of the cleanness of God. This area of the cleanness being itself the area of the godlike realities, the soul will no longer need to ask about those, for the soul will know those by experience.

judge and he will understand only by name the beauty had by those things, and his knowledge and his discernments will remain foreign to the pleasure of seeing those) - in the same way you have to understand about the sight of the Ghost. This aids for the mind seer of the hidden mysteries of the Ghost, if it is in the health of its nature, it will see even from now the glory of Christ and it won't ask about it and it won't learn about it, but it will only delight on itself for the pleasure of the mysteries of the new world<sup>741</sup>, above the freedom of the will, through the warmth of the faith and of the hope into Christ, as the Blessed Paul wrote: "And if we saw, what would we hope for? But we wait for, through patience" (Rom. 8: 25).

So, we owe to wait and to persevere monastically and with simplicity in our inward man, where there are not imprintings of thoughts, neither the sight of the composed things<sup>742</sup>. This is because, if the mind receives the likenesses of the realities which the mind looks at, when the mind looks at the world, according to the images which the mind scatters towards, the mind will receive from those imprintings and likenesses. And these ones, depending on how many they are, and according to the differences among their changes, they will move the thoughts within mind. And when the thoughts move within mind, they put their seal on the mind<sup>743</sup>. But if the mind looks at the inward man, there where isn't possible to occur some change of images, neither is there any possibility to discern any composition by changing the imprintings, but all is filled up with by Christ, it will be obvious that the mind received the simple sight, besides which nothing else can fill the soul's precipice

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<sup>741</sup> The sigh or the feeling of the godlike mysteries cannot take place in the absence of the grace, or without the effluvia of power starting out of God, which we are placed in connection with God through. But the grace of seeing those, or of their understanding feeling, it will be given only to that soul that has become healthy, by getting rid of the passions making that feeling blunt. So, the soul's state of health it doesn't elevate the man only among the realities of the nature from those which are below nature, from the state of illness, but it places the soul in touch with the godlike realities. Thus, the soul is either in state of illness and therefore insensitive to the godlike realities, or the soul is in state of health and then it is in touch with the godlike realities, or the soul is crossed through by the godlike realities.

<sup>742</sup> The most inner man is the most far from the images of the things, from the own imaginings, even from those related to the quick coming of the Kingdom of Heavens. There live the endless and bottomless infinite, that is the limitlessness of God as Person.

<sup>743</sup> The imprinting of the things perceived with the senses are answered by the full of lust or full of worry thoughts of the soul. And though thoughts, themselves the thoughts put their narrowing and passionate seal on the mind.

with good fragrance, and that makes the soul to achieve the daring during the prayer<sup>744</sup>. This is for this is the food of the soul's nature<sup>745</sup>.

And when the mind lives into the country of the knowledge of the truth, that mind doesn't need to ask something. This is because, like the bodily eye doesn't ask when it sees the sun, likewise the souly eye won't examine firstly and then look at the knowledge of the Ghost. Likewise, the mysterious sight desired by you, of, you the holy, it will be unveiled to your mind after you have achieved the health of your soul. That's why, that urge wanting to learn such mysteries, by research and judgment, that is an insanity of the soul. This is for the Blessed Paul too, he didn't say that he saw or heard the mysteries and the untold words, by learning those and in a material manner, but by being kidnapped into that spiritual country and there he saw the unveiling of those mysteries (2 Cor. 12: 4).

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<sup>744</sup> So, the inwards man is reckoned as the imageless state of the mind. In that indefinite, by missing any narrowing through the successive images of the things and of the imaginings, there can dwell Christ Who by the fact that He is God He matches that indefinite place, and by the fact that He is man He is felt close to us and in connection with us. The mind becomes focused on Him and only on Him. He is being explained what Saint Mark the Hermit says in the *Word about Baptism* (*The Romanian Philokalia*, volume I), where Christ is seen, in His quality as Hierarch, as receiving all our thoughts on the altar of our hearts, from their first occurrence within mind. But Saint Isaac completes the idea, by specifying that Christ as Hierarch, He fill up everything within us, and He spreads around His good fragrance in the indefinite precipice into the depths of the soul, filling us up with good fragrance. The bottomless precipice of the soul it is so kindred to the bottomless precipice of the godhead that one cannot see a border between them two. You only feel that your heart is not unveiled as precipice, except for there is another precipice more capable of maintaining itself as such, and you feel that your heart discovered or it actualized also the precipice of your heart. Of you feel the difference only in that that your precipice prays to the precipice of Him Who fills your precipice up as another abyss. And then you feel that not only Christ spreads around the good fragrance of the incense, but yourself do that to, by bringing on yourself as sacrifice to Christ. By living on yourself as precipice and by living on Christ as precipice within yourself, you will dare in your prayer. This is for you are no longer separated from Christ by something, but you feel Christ sunk within you and you feel yourself as sunk into Him, but without Him to be confounded to you.

<sup>745</sup> The soul is nourished and taken care of by the prayer, for through prayer the soul is united with God, and God with His endless depth give endless life to the soul. The prayer is said as being the angels' bread. The prayer was the bread of the Mother of the Lord into the Holy of the Holies. That's why, the hesychasts lost into prayer forget to eat for days in a row. Out of the godlike Ghost have been created and are upheld even the material things in their concretized reality. So, the Holy Ghost has the power to nourish not only our soul but our body too.

So, you too, of, you the holy, if you love the cleanness, you will cut off you that love that is overpoured towards everyone and, by entering the vineyard of your heart, you will work that vine; you pluck your passions off your soul and work in order you to no longer know the man's evilness. That cleanness that sees God it doesn't sprout out of request, but it will flourish within the soul, when the soul doesn't see the evilness of any man<sup>746</sup>.

If you want your heart to become the place of the mysteries of the new world, you firstly will enrich on yourself in deeds committed with your body, in fasting, in vigils, in the holy service (liturgy) of the ascesis, in patience, in destroying the thoughts, and in similar others. Tie up your mind in reading the Scriptures and in cogitating about them, write the commandments before your eyes and pay the debt of the passions by the fact that you overcome and you are overcome. And by the ceaseless speaking of the prayer and of your request, by thinking at them, you pluck off your heart any image and likeness which you were caught before by grabbing<sup>747</sup>.

Accustom your mind to always cogitate at the mysteries of our Savior's oikonomia and let aside the request for knowledge and for sight (for contemplation), which exceed the power of interpretation of the words, for their time and place,

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<sup>746</sup> It was said before that one must not ask for cleanness. But we must only ask for mercy because of our sins. The cleanness is innocence. That's why, the cleanness doesn't see somebody's evilness. He who see the evilness in somebody he too will be darkened by that evilness, and maybe even more than that evil man. That's why the cleanness sees God through all people and through all things, for the cleanness doesn't see the evilness that by its nature narrows the indefinite of the man who is seen and who sees.

<sup>747</sup> Very often, in the spiritual writings, we are asked to get rid of "prejudgments", namely to get rid of our passionate images from before. Those are evil habits which have gradually been strengthened within us, namely ways of thinking which caught us before us to judge whether they are good or evil' those are the thieves abducting us because of our lack of vigil. These prejudgments stop us from receiving the truth, from opening on ourselves to the truth, from judging all the way to the end sincerely. Still, through the prayer that is a dialogue with God, if the prayer is done uninterruptedly, the mind will get rid of all the narrowing images imprinted by habituation into the mind. But in order you to be able to persevere in prayer, you must have paid also your debt which you have burdened on yourself with, towards your passions, because you have been receiving the pleasure from your passions. You will pay this duty by fighting the passions' temptations, a fight that exhausts you and that makes you bleed (you "shed your blood"), sometimes overcoming, some other times being overcome, but not remaining into the same state and, by that, you will gradually get rid of the habituation to your passions.

and you follow the working of the commandments and of the deeds on the purpose of the cleaning, and in your prayer ask the Lord for a fire-sadness, fiery in all things (that one that occurred within the hearts of the apostles and of the martyrs and of the fathers); you ask Him to drip this one without your heart and ask Him you to be found worthy of the living with the mind.

And the beginning and the middle and the end of this living are these: the cutting off from everything through the union with Christ. And if you want to be given the sight of the mysteries, you will work by deeds the commandments within you and not because you aspire to achieve the knowledge about them. The spiritual sight works within us in the land (country) of the cleanness<sup>748</sup>. And you must not try firstly to learn how to enter the country of the mysteries of the Ghost. So, you must start like this:

The first among the mysteries is called the cleanness, that is born out of working the commandments. And the sight is the spiritual sight of the mind and it consists of amazing you and of penetrating all the made or being made realities. The sight is the sight of the mind and it consists of amazing you of the *oikonomia* of God in all generations and nations, and of penetrating His glory and the hardships leading to the new world. It consists of penetrating by those which the heart is being crushed through and which the heart is renewed by, and which the heart is nourished by in the likeness of the little children into Christ with the milk of the new and spiritual commandments, in order the heart to reach that lacking-of-evilness state, there where the heart will get accustomed to the mysteries of the Ghost and to the unveilings of the knowledge, by being elevated from knowledge to knowledge, and from sight to sight, to understanding, and the heart will learn and it will be

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<sup>748</sup> You do not aspire to know the mysteries in an unmediated manner, but you work the commandments in order you to become consummate, and through that you will become transparent to the showing of the mysteries through you. The mysteries of the life from above us they represent a spiritual order, non-composed, and full of love. We must stop our nature from jumping before time to a superior spiritual state. Not by theory can we know the superior order of the existence, but by our gradual transformation brought upon us by fulfilling the commandments. In the work of the cleaning deeds the monk must be helped by two things: 1) by cutting off his will from all the bodily and egotistic pleasures; 2) by cogitating at Christ for He is the example of the clean and full of sacrifice and full of love life. Only by reaching thus at the country of the cleanness, the monk will see within himself the mysteries of the godlike ocean.



strengthened mysteriously, until the heart will ascend into love and it will be united into hope and it will dwell within heart the joy and the heart will be elevated into God and the heart will be crowned with the natural glory had by the heart when first created<sup>749</sup>.

In these orchards (dwelling places) of the Ghost the mind ascends through the unveiling of the knowledge. But the mind falls again and it rises again and it is victorious and it is defeated and it is roasted in the oven of the monastic cell. And so, the mind will be cleaned and it will be bestowed mercy and it will be found worthy through deed of seeing the Holy Trinity which the mind wants. This is for the sights of the natures which the mind will be elevated in and it will work in and it will get accustomed to, are three: "two of the created natures, of the speaking and of the speechless creatures, or spiritual and bodily<sup>750</sup>, and the third one that of the Holy Trinity. So, firstly, when approaching any creature, the sight is directed towards creation and through it the mind penetrates to the unveiling of the conscience. For the realities not falling under senses the sight is understanding. And the mind has the power for seeing on itself<sup>751</sup>. But the external philosophers have scattered this cogitation of theirs in created imaginations<sup>752</sup>.

But the sight of the sons of the mystery of the faith, it is united to the faith and it is guarded into the orchard of the Scriptures. That sight gathers the mind from any scattering into the external realities and it nails the mind into the union with Christ, in the likeness of Basil and of Gregory.

Thus, the sight of the mind is tied to the mysterious words from within Scripture. And those words which are not understood by knowledge are admitted by us by faith. And by

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<sup>749</sup> The sight of the mysteries in state of kidnapping it is not an ecstatic sight, but it is an elevation from knowledge to knowledge. And above all there is the union into consummate love with God, maintaining the hope for an even greater union. Saint Isaac, according to his teaching, he reckons that at that time our nature will be crowned with that glory had by it in the beginning, or with that glory it would have received if it hadn't fell.

<sup>750</sup> First, we cross through creatures to the godlike rationalities. This is called as knowledge, or gnosis, as helped by the Holy Ghost. On this plan the knowledge understands on one hand by the speaking natures, or the souls of the people and the angels, and on the other hand it understands the speechless natures, namely the people's bodies and everything that is a creature by and large.

<sup>751</sup> The sight of God characteristic to the angels it is called as understanding, thought is it above-understanding.

<sup>752</sup> Their constructions are not a knowledge corresponding to the superior objective reality.

sight we receive a knowledge about them, one that occurs within us after us achieving our cleanness. And for the mysteries of the Ghost, those ones which are above-knowledge, which are not perceived by bodily senses neither known by the mind's rationality, God has given us the faith which we know about those only that they exist. And by itself the faith there will be born the hope within us.

By faith we confess that God is our Lord and Master and Creator and Maker of all realities. And by knowledge we know that we must keep His commandments, and that we must understand that His old commandments are guarded by fear, as the same apostle said (Rom. 8: 15), and that the of-life-maker commandments of Christ are guarded by be love, as Himself said: "I have kept the commandments of My Father and I remain into His love" (Jn. 15: 10). So, it is obvious that not because of fear the Son keeps the commandments of His Father, but out of love. And that why He commands us too to keep His commandments out of love, as He says: "I you love Me, you will keep My commandments and I will pray My Father and another Comforter He will send to you" (Jn. 14: 15). He calls the coming of the Ghost as the gifts of the unveiling of the mysteries of the Ghost, in order to have, by receiving the Ghost, the consummation of the spiritual knowledge which the apostle received it too. And the Comforter was confessed and promised by our Lord, by praying His Father to be the Comforter given to the people, in order the Comforter to remain forever with them after the working of the commandments and after achieving the cleanness.

Can you see that by keeping the commandments the mind will be found worthy of the gift of the mysterious sight and of the unveiling of the knowledge of the Ghost? He didn't mean, as your wisdom did, that et deed of keeping the commandments is an impediment in the way of seeing of the godlike mysteries which are done in the work of the appeasement.

So, I pray you, if you feel within your soul that you have reached the country of the love, you will keep the new commandments, for the love of Him Who issued these commandments, and not because of fear. This is for the Blesse Paul said too: "Who will separate me from the love of Christ? Some trouble, or some prison, or some persecution" and the followings (Rom. 8: 35-38) and he adds also: "For I am convinced that neither the death, nor the life, neither the

present realities, not the future realities can separate me from the love of God into Jesus Christ, our Lord". And in order one not to believe that he wants the much payment, of the honor, or the overwhelming gift of the spiritual realities, as your holiness wants, he said: "I would have wanted to be anathema from Christ", in order the foreigner to come closer to Him (Rom. 9: 3). And in order you to know that he didn't aim to see the mysterious and hermit's sight, but he wants that sight which some people often were found worthy by grace, listen to what he says in another place: "If I spoke in angelic tongues and in human tongues, but I had no love, I would become sounding brass and resounding cymbal; and if I had prophecy and if I saw all the mysteries and if I had all the knowledge and even faith as to move even the mountains, but I had not love, I would be nothing" (1 Cor. 13: 1-2).

This is for the appointed door leading to these ones it is the love. If we achieve the love, the love will lead us to these ones. But if we are found worthy of these ones without love, by grace, it will happen to us to lose them. So, the love is the one that gains and guards the high goods of the saints and the godlike living. Immediately after the monk has lost the love, his heart will lose the peace too (and this is the dwelling place of God)<sup>753</sup> and the door of the grace will be shut to him, that door that our Lord said that He will enter and He will exit, as He said: "I am the door of the life and into Me he will enter to guard and he will find pasture" towards nourishing his spiritual life (Jn. 10: 4), But where there is peace, the monk won't be impeded either by evilness to enter, or by deceit, but he is helped by love to enter and to exit, through all the levels of the unveilings of the knowledge and of the mysterious views<sup>754</sup>, like whose who are free into Christ.

And in order you to know the truth of these ones, namely that truly the spiritual life is the sight of the mind, you listen to what the great Paul says. This is for he shouts out: "I do not want to be in it without love". And if I enter the lawful sadness due to the love, or if I enter the sight, I won't lust for it with my

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<sup>753</sup> The love is reckoned as one with the peace, but not vice versa. That is a warm peace embracing everyone. That's why this peace lasts. And where this peace is, there is God too. This peace springs out of God, or God shows on Himself through this peace.

<sup>754</sup> So interprets Saint Gregory of Nyssa the goings in and the goings out within that soul that Ascends spiritually: entering with the soul to a new view and exiting that view with the soul, in order to enter again a higher view.

lust. And if it is given me by grace, when I haven't achieved the love yet, that won't be because I have asked for it. So, I will have not entered at it through the natural door, that is the love<sup>755</sup>.

Therefore, we must firstly gain the love, that is before seeing the Holy Trinity<sup>756</sup>. And after that there will occur within mind without being bestowed, naturally, the sight of the spiritual realities.

You have to understand the wisdom of the Blessed Paul, as he left all the gifts bestowed him by grace and he asked for the itself hypostasis of the things that receives the gifts and that guards them, as somebody says<sup>757</sup>. The gift of seeing the creatures was given to Moses too, and many others were found worthy of it, but not by steadfast entrustment, but by unveiling. But I the one baptized (immersed) into the Holy Ghost, and being I full of grace, I want to receive within me the feeling of Christ Who dwells within me. And He is the One Whom we have put on out of water and Ghost, and through an untold mystery He has united us with Himself and He has made us limbs of His body. But here, as downpayment. And in the new world, He shares out of His life to the other limbs. So, why do you want to search for the sight before having achieved the love, when the godlike Paul reckoned the sight as worthless without love?

When you said that working the commandments impedes you from seeing, it was obvious that you defamed the love for your neighbor and you have valued more the sight (contemplation-knowledge) and you wanted to have it when it

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<sup>755</sup> One must enter at the view through love; one enters so, after a real spiritual growth. And one reaches the love by enduring the troubles, which God sends him for the love for the spiritual strengthening, for the strengthening into love of them who Him wants to elevates them towards Him.

<sup>756</sup> The love is being defined here like that view from before seeing the Holy Trinity. God is loved, namely, for all the things He has done for us, for understanding those, or for seeing those. Only then the man is prepared for understanding that God is love, namely the consummate communion of the Three Persons. Only then the man will feel the love as coming from the Holy Trinity, of he feels the Holy Trinity Themselves in that love.

<sup>757</sup> Saint Paul wanted, more than all the gifts, the communion with the hypostasis or with the foundation of all the realities, or with the godlike Person. But you cannot unite yourself with a person and you cannot know a person but through love, while views of knowledge of the things can be bestowed also by a special gift. But the most proper and the highest gift is it is the grace of the communion with Christ, the grace of the love. We are firstly imparted with this union with Christ Who is the hypostasis of all the created realities, at our Baptism. Then we immerse within Himself as Person, through the power of the Holy Ghost Who irradiates out of Christ into us. Any sight, if it is by a gift and not by love, it is inferior to the union with Christ as Person.

was impossible having it. This is for, until a certain time arrives, we won't be able to have the sight, oh, you all-wise one, but then the sight will show itself to us by itself, at its time.

As in the aspects of the nature, as our body is growing up, our soul receives an ever-diverse knowledge and our soul feels the realities form within world and our soul is getting day by day accustomed to them, likewise in what regards the aspects of the Ghost somebody receives the spiritual sight and the godlike sanctification and he will get accustomed to them as his mind advances in the life of the cogitation. But when his mind reaches the country of the love<sup>758</sup>, the mind sees at that place the spiritual realities, which, until somebody forces them to descend to him, they won't listen<sup>759</sup>. This is because, despite him daringly imagining those, and despite him wanting to see those and to understand those before time, his sight gets weakened and instead of the true spiritual realities he will perceive hallucinations and imaginings<sup>760</sup>.

When those imaginings come into your mind, if your mind is able to discern them, you will say that you are not searching for the sight before time, because even though what it is shown to you seems to be sight, it actually is the shadow of the sight and that sight is not sight. This is for everything that is on that plan thought with the mind, it can produce a resemblance and an image of the imagination. But it also can cause a true view. This is for the composed natures too can cause imaginings. But sometimes they also cause true views. If the view is true, there will be a light in it. Then, what is being seen it is close to the truth. But when what one sees is not true, the eye will see a shadow instead of truth. The eye sees water there where is no water, and the eye sees lifted buildings

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<sup>758</sup> Saint Isaac discerns between "seeing" the true spiritual and godlike realities, that comes after working the commandments, namely after gaining the love, and the imaginings of the imagination, which haven't been preceded by that working of the commandments, those imaginings being produced by the pride knowledge, until the man gets consummate by gaining the virtues which have as their culminant level the love for God as Person.

<sup>759</sup> One reaches to love through the life of the cogitation, for the live of the cogitation is that cogitation that no longer occupies on itself with the material things, but with Him Who is its life: with the Person of Christ, with God as Person.

<sup>760</sup> The Beloved One doesn't descend, at order, by being forced, but by being His will fulfilled, and through the proofs of love shown Him out of the fulfillment of this commandments of His, and by enduring the hardships on the tiring road to Him. He reveals on Himself, freely, to them who love Him. And He is not forced to unveil on Himself, or He is not unveiled in His interior, without His will.

floating in the air when those buildings actually are sitting on the ground. If it is so in the bodily aspects, you must think that it is likewise in the case of the incorporeal realities.

If the sight of the mind is not cleaned through the working of the commandments and through the deeds of the living into quietude, the sight of the mind won't gain the light of the love into consummation<sup>761</sup>. And if he doesn't grow up into the renewed age of Christ, and if he doesn't get close to the spiritual natures by knowledge, namely close to that level which he searches on for the angelic living of the Ghost, one won't be able to reach to be true seer of the godlike unveiling. And no matter how many resemblances the mind tries to contrive, they will be imaginings and not true. And the fact of seeing the mind always different, it will happen to him because of the fact that he hasn't cleaned himself up yet. This is for the nature of the truths remains always unchangeable, by never changing itself into likenesses. The cause of the hallucinations of the imagining is the weakness and not the cleanness of the mind<sup>762</sup>.

This can happen also to the outside philosophers, because they reckoned that these ones are spiritual, and because they haven't received this teaching from God. This is because, out of the shaking and of the moving of their rationality and by the meanings of their thoughts, they reckoned, in their imagination, that these ones would be something. And together with these ones, they cogitated how those ones are. They contrived so the way they were composed

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<sup>761</sup> Only into love there is the light of the consummate knowledge. On the measure of the love there will increase the knowledge too. The consummate love has consummate knowledge. This is for him who loves consummately, he will unite himself consummately with the one whom he loves on, and he knows the realities from within Him as communicated freely by Him. There where the love is, there will be the truth too, or the unveiling of the truth, or the light.

<sup>762</sup> The products of the imagination, as also all the succeeding imaginings having limited and material shapes, they are contrary to that "sight" lacking any imaginings, of the godlike realities, a sight that is characteristic to the spiritual people also called as Ghost bearers. This is for, this "sights" is always an indefinite feeling of the unlimited, of the bottomless deep. In all these pages Saint Isaac explains the difference between the "sight" into Ghost and the products of the imagination or of the defined knowledge, as applied to the spiritual order, or of the chaotic imaginings. This is for the infinite of the godlike reality is in the same time full of a harmony of meanings, of characters perceives and imprinted into the seer being, producing within him a life of a great harmony and or right-reckoning. This order of the Ghost can be expressed, therefore, thought symbols, but in its feeling one must cross beyond symbols, through the symbols themselves, being shown right in that that this order is the origin of the meanings and of the images of the harmony of the created world.

and their changing. And they spoke about those ones on the basis of some inappropriate opinions and they divided The One God and they explained Him and they composed Him in many gods by the occupation of their mind. And this hallucination of their mindless thoughts they called it as sight (contemplation) of the natures<sup>763</sup>.

But the true sight of those natures submitted to the senses and of those unsubmitted to the senses and the seeing of the Himself Holy Trinity, we receive it in that unveiling into Christ which He taught it and show it to the people when He brought, for the first time, the renewal of the human nature<sup>764</sup> in His hypostasis and so He has opened within Himself the way us to cross through His of-life-maker commandments to truth<sup>765</sup>. And the nature is able to become seer of the true view and not of a hallucination, when the man disrobed on himself of the former man of the passions, at the beginning by enduring the sufferings and through troubles, as the newborn child disrobes the placenta which he has been wrapped in until his birth. Then the mind will be able to be spiritually born and to show itself in the world of the Ghost and to receive the sight of its country.

But the present sight of the creatures, despite being sweet, it is a shadow of the knowledge and its sweetness is not separated from the hallucination of the dreams. And the sight of the new world into the ghost of the unveiling, which the spiritual mind is being delighted in, it is a work of the grace and it is not the shadow of the knowledge. And tis sweetness is not separated form that of that one, which the Apostle wrote about: "The realities which the eye hasn't seen yet and the ear hasn't heard yet and which haven't ascended yet to the man's heart,

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<sup>763</sup> By dividing The One God in many gods, they confounded those gods to the diverse parts of the nature. Through that they didn't know either the godhead. Knowing the true God means knowing that the nature of the things is not identical to the godhead. This is said by Saint Isaac in continuation.

<sup>764</sup> Only into Christ, in Who God has taken the human nature as differing form the godlike nature but still maintaining the godlike nature as well, one can know both God as God and the nature as created. Out of the way of speaking about Christ as Hypostasis of the human nature that has been renewed and resurrected by Christ just because He has taken it within Himself, we can see that Saint Isaac is opposed to Nestorianism, that was wrongly attributed by some critics.

<sup>765</sup> Out of the importance granted by Saint Isaac to the human work of Christ in the accomplishment of the renewal brought by Christ to our nature, one can see also that Saint Isaac was opposed to Monophysitism too.

those ones have been prepared by god to them who love Him” (1 Cor. 2: 9). But to the saints God unveiled through His Ghost. “For the Ghost visits all realities, even the deeps of God” (1 Cor. 2: 10). And this view becomes nourishment to the mind, until the mind will be able to receive a higher view. This is for the view is imparted to the sight, until the mind enters the country of the consummate love. This is for the love if the country of the spiritual realities, and the love dwells into the cleanness of the soul. And when the mind dwells into the country of the love, the grace will work and the mind will receive the sight of the Ghost and the mind will become seer of the hidden realities. This is for I said that two are the givers of the gift of the unveilings of the sight of the mind<sup>766</sup>.

Sometimes it is given by grace, through the warmth of the faith. On some other times through working the commandments and through cleanness. Out of grace it has been given to the blessed apostles, who didn’t clean their minds by working the commandments and who were not found worthy of the unveiling of the sight, but of the warmth of the faith. For they believed in Christ into simplicity and they followed Him unhesitatingly, with a fiery heart. And when He consummated His all-worshipped oikonomia, He sent them the Comforter Ghost and the Ghost cleaned them and Hew consummate their mind and He killed, with the work, that former man of the passions from within them, and also with the work He made alive within them the new man of the ghost; and they received the feeling of both of these. Likewise, the Blesses Paul was renewed mysteriously and then he receive the sight of the unveiling of the mysteries and that’s why he didn’t despair and one who would have received with the work the grace and the gift; but for the whole his life he traveled the road of answering according to the power of the grace that he was found worthy of, since Christ spoke to Paul on the way as with one of His disciples and He send Paul to Damascus. It hasn’t been written

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<sup>766</sup> Out of grace and out of working; or, out of the cleanness of the mind and out of grace. Sometimes, these two are: the grace and the faith, some other times the working of the commandments, that reaches the cleanness, and from cleanness it reaches the love. But int this case too, the grace still helps. Sometimes the mind “sees” by faith before reaching the love. But, usually, the mind in love “sees” the godlike realities. But the love dwells into the clean soul. And one reaches the cleanness by the removal of his passions. There is not “sight” without love. Only him who loves he “sees” into the beloved one. All the more, only that one “sees” into God.



only that Christ spoke to Paul manifestly, but also that Anania told Paul: “Saul, brother, our Lord Jesus Christ Who has shown on Himself to you on the way, He sent me to you in order your eyes to see and to be filled up with the Holy Ghost”; and that when Anania baptized Paul, Paul was filled up with the Holy Ghost and Paul felt the hidden mysteries of the unveilings (Acts 9: 17), as those unveilings were worked also within the holy apostles when Jesus was walking together with them. For Jesus told them: “I still have many things to say you, but now you cannot bear those. But when the Holy Ghost will come, That One will lead you to the whole truth and the future things He will herald you” (Jn. 16: 12).

And it is obvious that the Blessed Paul, when he received the Holy Ghost and so Paul was renewed, he was made worthy of consummation and of seeing into the Ghost of the unveilings and he was delighting on himself into seeing and he heard untold words and he had a sight superior to the nature and he rejoiced of the views of the heavenly Powers and he was delighting on himself with the spiritual things. And it is not true what the heretics called as “Ehvites” that Paul ascended that climbing by his own will (because the man cannot ascend there by any means), but Paul was kidnapped by the Ghost of the unveilings, as he said in his apostle addressed to Corinthians against the vain people who liken on themselves to the holy apostles and they confess the imaginings of their thoughts and they call those as spiritual views. That was said against many heretics, I mean those close to Origen<sup>767</sup>, to Valentin<sup>768</sup>, to the son of Disas, and to Marcion<sup>769</sup>, and to Manes<sup>770</sup>, and the other chiefs of the evil heresies, which started in the time of the apostles and they still are up to this day in some places.

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<sup>767</sup> “As many teachings dogmatized about faith and about a higher sight (Origen) are more insane than those belonging to all of them who were before him and after him, except the ugly deeds of the heresies” (Epiphanius, Bibl., tome I, *About Heresies*, 44, 64). It can be seen that Saint Isaac wrote after the Fifth Ecumenical Synod took place.

<sup>768</sup> “Those who were around Valentin, besides nonsense, they reckon on themselves as superior, as Irenaeus says, by calling on themselves as consummate and seeds of the choice. They say about us that we receive the grace through a seen work, that’s why we lose it too; but they have received the grace through ads descending from above, from an untold and nameless pair” (Epiphanius, Bibl. I, tome II, *Heres.* 31).

<sup>769</sup> “Marcion didn’t believe only in three principles: that God is good, that God is seen, and in the devil, but Marcion broke the Holy Scriptures and he multiplied the godlike Baptism and he dogmatized only the resurrection of the soul” (Epiphanius, Bibl. I, tome III, *Heres.* 22, 42).

<sup>770</sup> “Manes who was also called as Manichaeus” (Epiphanius, Bibl. II, tome I. *Heres.* 44, 66).

So, because some people broken by the imagination of the devils wanted to break the teaching of the Holy Apostles, the godlike apostle was forced to undermine the praise of the heretics who was boasting on themselves with the shadow of the work of the devils which were showing to them, when he described the godlike view of his with humbleness and with much fear, as attributing it to somebody else: "I knew, he said, a man into Christ, who fourteen years ago, either outside body, or into body, I do not know, God knows, he was kidnapped into Paradise and he heard words which the man is not allowed to speak" (2 Cor. 12: 2). So, he says that he was kidnapped with kidnapping and not that he willingly ascended there, with his mind, in that view from the third sky. He wrote that he saw views but he couldn't describe those views in writing. This is because his mind when it saw those views into the Ghost of the unveilings, at their place, the mind didn't receive the permission to speak about those views in a place inappropriate to those views. He couldn't speak about those even if he wanted. This is because he didn't see those with his bodily senses. This is because what the mind received through the bodily senses, the mind can interpret those through the things from the material world as well, into the world of the bodies. But what the mind sees, or hears, or feels inside, or in the motherland of the Ghost, in a felt manner<sup>771</sup>, and therefore when the mind turns back to the body the mind cannot describe those, but the mind only remembers of seeing those, but how the mind did that the mind cannot explain limpidly.

Through these are proven as liar the writings called as unveilings, which are composed by the chiefs of the heresies, and which are caused by the hallucination from the devils, about the dwelling places of the seen sky, which their mind leads them with its own will, in order they to know those, and about the entrances into the sky of the mind and about diverse places of imagination, and about the diverse images of the powers and about the work of those powers. All of those are shadows of a mind drunk with pride and wounded by the work of the devils. That's why, the Blessed Paul closed with a sole word the door of any view, and it locked that view inside silence. This is because, those realities which the mind couldn't

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<sup>771</sup> Even the realities of the Ghost are being felt, but with another feeling than the bodily feeling.

describe even if it wanted, how could him be allowed to talk about those? This is for he said that all the views which can be described by the tongue in the world of the bodies, are imaginings of the soul's thoughts and not a work of the grace<sup>772</sup>.

So, your piousness, as I told you, take heed at the hallucinations of the deep thoughts<sup>773</sup>. This war usually starts against the monks who have a sharp mind and who search for the vain-glory and who desire the novelties, and against those monks who live in front of others<sup>774</sup>.

They said that a certain man called Malpas, who originated from Edessa, he contrives the heresy of the Ehevites, while living a high life in deeds of great harshness and in troubles. This is because, as they say, he was the disciple of the Blessed Julian, called as Sava, and he left for a short while, together with him, for Sinai and Egypt, and to visit the great fathers of that time. And there he saw the Blessed Anthony and he heard from him secret words told about cleanness and about the salvation of the souls; he also heard subtle words about passions, which that one explained through, that the mind has many views about the mysteries of the Ghost after the mind gets cleaned; and that the soul can be found worthy of dispassion by grace, when, by working the commandments, the mind is described of the old passions and the mind becomes steadfast in the first health of the nature.

And when Malpas heard those words, for he was at the peak of his age, he got hot like a fire and he turned back to his city and he was burning with the passion of the vain-glory. And he chose for himself an isolated dwelling place and he dedicated on himself to soke harsh deeds and troubles and to ceaseless prayer. And there was burning within himself the insane passion of the glory, and he hoped to reach the high things which he heard about, but before he got accustomed to the craftsmanship of resisting the enemies of the truth and before

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<sup>772</sup> Any "view" that can be described in concrete images isn't a true view, but it is a product of the hallucination. The godlike realities lives by the spiritual people have no images and they cannot be described in images. They are untold. There cannot be captured in limited images the limitless realities.

<sup>773</sup> The expression "deep thoughts" has here an evil meaning: those are thoughts from the demons deep of evilness, from the inferior deep of the passions which in their instantiation seen to be a bottomless deep.

<sup>774</sup> It is here about those who live theatrically, in order to be seen by others.

knowing the traps and the tricks and the plots of the enemy, which the enemy tried to steal with, towards perdition, even on the strong and powerful ones. So, he based on himself only on deeds and on troubles and on poverty and on toiling and on restraint, because he didn't gain the self-despise and the humbleness and the crushing of the heart, which are the undefeated weapons against the opposition coming from the cunning enemy. Neither he remembered about the Scripture that says: "When you will have fulfilled all the deeds and you will have kept all the commandments and you will have endured all the troubles, you will reckon on yourself as worthless servants" (Lk. 17: 10). But he walked with a high-self-appreciation for himself, and for the work of his living and he was burning with the desire for the high things which he heard about.

And after a while, when the devil saw him emptied of the work of the humbleness and desiring to feel only the view of the mysteries which he heard about, the devil showed on himself in a stranger light and told him: "I am the Comforter and I have been sent by the Father to you, in order I to give you the dispassion and to rest you from deeds since now on. Instead of deeds, that plotter asked for him to be worshipped by that poor man. And that insane man, because of not feeling the war waged him by the cunning one, he immediately welcomed the enemy with joy and he worshipped the enemy and he immediately fell under the enemy's mastery. And instead of the godlike sight he was filled up with the hallucinations from the evils and that made him cease from doing deeds for the truth, and he was deceived by vain hope for dispassion, because he was told that: "Now you no longer need deeds, or to work torment your body, or of that asceticism that resists the passions and the lusts". And the devil made him the beginner of the heresy of the Ehevites. And when his disciples become many, and they made know their ugly and lair teaching, they were condemned by the bishop of that county.

Also, another man called Asinas, by composing in the same city of Edessa many verses of three words song even up to these days, he lived a high living and he tied on himself, recklessly, to some very harsh deeds, in order to achieve glory. That one was deceived by the devil and the devil got him out of his monastic cell and the devil took him on a mountain called as Storios, and the devil materialized and showed him image of

chariots and horses and told him: "God has sent me to take you in heavens with me, as on Elijah". And when Asinas allowed on himself to be deceived with his childish soul, and he get in a chariot, the whole hallucination scattered away and he fell off that mountain and he died a mockery death.

I haven't told these things here vainly, but in order us to know the mockery form the devils who are thirsty for destroying the saints, and us not to lust, at an inappropriate time, for the high aspects of the living with the mind, in order us not to become laughing stock to our cunning enemy, because I am seeing even today some younger and full of passions one, who are hallucinating and fearlessly dogmatizing about the mysteries of the dispassion. It was written by a certain saint about those people who were full of passions and who were spying the meanings of the bodily and of the bodiless realities, and they didn't differ from the ill people teaching about health. The Blessed Paul, when he heard about those disciples who were disregarding the commandments, but they lusted for the happiness of that sight from after cleanness, he told them: "You must disrobe firstly the former man of the passions and then after you can desire to put on the new man, who is renewed into the knowledge of the mysteries, in the likeness of our Maker. And you must not lust for mine, of the apostles, which it consummated in a working manner by grace" (Eph. 4: 20).

"Therefore, God has mercy on whom he wills, and on whom he wills He makes callous" (Rom. 9: 18<sup>775</sup>). So, who will stay in front of God, or against God's will?

This is for, on occasions, God bestows as a gift; while on some other times God asks for the deeds and for the cleanness of the life and then God bestows. But sometimes God won't bestow the cleanness here even after deeds, but God keeps the cleanness to give it in its country. We find out that God does that also with the things that is inferior to cleanness, namely with the forgiveness of the sins. This is for, lo, in Baptism God bestows the forgiveness of the sins as a gift, and God doesn't ask for anything else except for faith. But in the repentance for sins from after Baptism God won't bestow that as a gift, but God asks for toils and for troubles and for sadness and for pricking, and for tears and for crying, for a long time, and only

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<sup>775</sup> In KJB we have: "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." (E. l. t.'s n.)

then God will forgive our sins. God forgave the thief as a gift, and God promised the thief the Kingdom of Heavens, after the sole confession, with the word, on the cross. And from the sinner woman, God asked for faith and tears. But from the confessor martyrs, together with the faith of their heart, God asked for troubles, for torments, for pricking, for punishments, and for death in many ways.

Convinced of these things and of similar ones, your holiness must take heed both at the first things and at the last things, and you must not ask for the sigh before the time for sight has come<sup>776</sup>. And as long as you are locked into the world of the body, you must strive to do the deeds of the repentance and you must fight your passions and you must endure into the fulfillment of the commandments and you must guard on yourself against the mockery coming from the devils and from those who herald the unchanged consummation in this passionate and tending to deviations world<sup>777</sup>. This is because those are not characteristic even to the holy angels who liturgize to the Father and to the Ghost, and who wait for the renewal of the world from within middle<sup>778</sup>, and they to be liberated from the slavery of the corruption into the freedom of the sons of God (Rom. 8: 12). This is because, could be consummation here where the sun rises and sets in the middle of the clouds, and here is clean sky and there is cloudy, where here is joy and there is sadness, and here where against these the wolves have their part too, as one among the saint said? And may God support the foundation of your living in the true steadfastness and into the holy teaching. Who it is due the glory and the

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<sup>776</sup> On one hand, Saint Isaac asks the monk for deeds for, by reaching through deeds the cleanness and the thinness of his body and the subtlety of his mind, the monk to become able of seeing the imageless realities, while on the other hand Saint Isaac asks the monk not to search for that sight while still in this life. Saint Isaac asks the monks not to trust them who herald the unchanged consummation in this world submitted to corruption. And here Saint Isaac is telling a full of mystery word, by affirming that neither the angels will reach this unchanged consummation as long as this world submitted to corruption lasts. By this, Saint Isaac means that also the angels will reach the supreme consummation only after the whole creation will have reached its consummation unsubmitted to corruption, and the angles too wait for the renewal of the world from the middle, namely of the Creation placed within us and God. This last part of his epistle it is a total rejection of a consummation that one could achieve within this world, and therefore it is a total rejection of the millenarism.

<sup>777</sup> It is probably here about the devils which can tempt and cause trouble in this world.

<sup>778</sup> Of the world being situated between people and God.

mastery and the worshipping, not and for the endless ages of the ages. Amen.

### **Troparion of the Saint, voice III**

You have made on yourself a godlike sacrifice, you the blessed one. This is for like another great Isaac you shined in Syria, you by God instilled, and as one who urges to quietude, and made wise by God, by godlike appointment you have been priest in Nineveh, you the blessed one. Holy Father, you pious Isaac, pray to Christ Him to give us who desire you, a great mercy.

### **Kontakion, voice VIII**

Churchly Son: *To The Defender Lady...*

You have shown on yourself as an all-luminous Morningstar, with the beginning of holiness luminating and on those who were in the darkness of the passions making them shine, as an all-illuminated adviser of the quietude. And as the one who took the gift of the grace, you give them who ask for it you give them the forgiveness of their mistakes, in order us to shout out: Rejoice, Father Isaac!

### **Another similar one**

On the great adviser of that quietude according to the law and of that non-strayed sight illuminated helper, and of Nineveh wise and deified hierarch, and the beauty of the Syria and its offspring, and the clean vessel of the godlike Ghost, let us praise Isaac the all-herald and the glorified.

### **Oikos**

As an angel, father, living your life, you were extolling That One Who alone is before all realities, and from Him being

your mind enlightened, you have shown on yourself as light-bearer to them who strive on themselves towards Him, so that we are humbly singing to you these:

Rejoice, you whom the world is overlooked through;  
 Rejoice, you whom the passions are uprooted through;  
 Rejoice, you who are the monk's all-great comforting;  
 Rejoice, you who are of the fallen ones a new standing up;  
 Rejoice, you who wrote books which overwhelm many other books;  
 Rejoice, for you enriched the soul of the hesychasts;  
 Rejoice, for you flew on the height of the sight;  
 Rejoice, for you satiate the mind's thirst;  
 Rejoice, you shepherd among people, you by God chose;  
 Rejoice, you the candlestick of Christ's image;  
 Rejoice, you who the poverty is honored through;  
 Rejoice godlike Isaac, you the pillar of the good things;  
 Rejoice Syrian, you the threefold blessed!

**The Prayer  
 Towards Our Lord Jesus Christ  
 Of Saint Isaac the Syrian**

Lord Jesus Christ, our God, who cried for Lazarus and tears of sadness and of mercy You shed for Lazarus, please receive my tears. Heal my passions with Your sufferings. Heal my wound with Your wounds. Clean my blood with Your blood, and mix within my body the good fragrance of Your of-life-maker body. The gall which You enemies gave You to drink, may sweeten the bitterness which my enemy gave me to drink. May Your body stretched on the cross to stretch towards You my mind pulled downwards by the devils. May you head that You leaned on the cross to elevate my head slapped by my enemies. May Your holy hands nailed on the cross pull me towards You, out of the precipice of my perdition, as Your all-holy mouth promised us. May you face mocked with slapping and spitting to fill up with shininess my face defiled by my lawlessness. May Your soul whom You gave to Your Father while on the cross, to advise me towards You, through Your grace. I do not have a full of pain heart in order to search for You, I do not have repentance, neither I have humiliation,



which turn the sons back to their inheritance. I do not have comforting tears, my Master. My mind has been darkened with the worldly things, and it cannot look in pain at You. My heart has become cold because of so many temptations and it cannot get hot with the tears of my love for You. But You, Lord Jesus Christ, You God, You the Treasures of the goods, You bestow me endless repentance and a heart full of pain, so that I could start, with the whole my soul, in searching for You. This is because without You I will become stranger to all good. Therefore, You give me, You the Good One, Your grace.

The Father Who gave You birth out of His bosoms, without years and before eternity, may Him renew within me the image of Your icon. I have forsaken You, please, You do not forsake me; I have left You, please come out and search for me. Take me to Your pasture. Count me among Your chosen sheep, nourish me together with them with the greenery of Your godlike mysteries. This is for their clean heart is Your dwelling place, and one can see within their heart the shininess of Your unveilings. Your shininess is the comforting and the resting of them who have toiled for You, in troubles and in all sorts of torments. Please make worthy of this shininess me who are unworthy, by the grace and by the love for people of our Savior Jesus Christ, forever and ever! Amen.